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MORAL AND LITERARY

DISSERTATIONS;

CHIEFLY INTENDED AS THE SEQUEL

TO

A FATHER'S INSTRUCTIONS.

REM TIBI SOCRATICÆ POTERUNT OSTENDERE CHARTÆ.

——— QUO VIRTUS; QUO FERAT ERROR.

HOR.

MORAL AND LITERARY

DISSERTATIONS,

ON THE

FOLLOWING SUBJECTS;

1. On *Truth* and *Faithfulneſs.*
2. On *Habit* and *Aſſociation.*
3. On *Inconſiſtency* of *Expectation* in *Literary Purſuits.*
4. On a *Taſte* for the general *Beauties* of *Nature.*
5. On a *Taſte* for the *Fine Arts.*
6. On the *Alliance* of *Natural Hiſtory,* and *Philoſophy,* with *Poetry.*

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

A TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF

CHARLES DE POLIER, ESQ.

AND AN

APPENDIX.

BY

THOMAS PERCIVAL, M.D. F.R.S. & S.A.

MEMBER OF THE MEDICAL SOCIETIES
OF LONDON AND EDINBURGH,
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AT PARIS, &c. &c.

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TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND

RICHARD WATSON,

D. D. F. R. S.

LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF;

&c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

THE approbation, with which your lordſhip has been pleaſed to honour the firſt part of the Work, now offered to your acceptance, encourages me to hope that you will receive the ſubſequent Diſſertations, with the ſame friendly and

 candid

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candid indulgence. And I am happy in the preſent opportunity, of publicly expreſſing the reſpect, eſteem, and attachment with which I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

Your Lordſhip's

much obliged,

and moſt faithful

humble Servant,

THOMAS PERCIVAL.

THE

PREFACE.

IN offering to the public a miſcellaneous work, like the following, it may be proper to give a brief account of the different parts, of which it is compoſed. The SOCRATIC DISCOURSE was written ſeveral years ago, for the uſe of the author's own family; and a few printed copies of it were diſtributed amongſt his friends. The approbation with which it has been honoured, by ſome of the moſt judicious of them, has abated his diffidence concerning it; and the deſire of rendering his private labours of utility to

mankind, has induced him to commit it again to the preſs. It forms the firſt part of a plan, which he has long had in contemplation, of teaching his older children the moſt important branches of ethics, viz. VERACITY, FAITHFULNESS, JUSTICE, and BENEVOLENCE, in a *ſyſtematic* and *experimental* manner, by EXAMPLES. But various cauſes have hitherto prevented, and will probably continue to prevent, the completion of his deſign. He cordially wiſhes, therefore, that ſome moraliſt, of more leiſure and ſuperior abilities, into whoſe hands this little piece may fall, would execute, in its full extent, what is here ſo partially and imperfectly attempted.

To promote the love of truth, and to excite an averſion to duplicity and falſhood;

falſhood, are objects which merit the moſt ſerious attention, in the buſineſs of education. And as the minds of children, at an early age, are incapable of diſcerning the diſtinctions and ſubordinations of moral duty, the rules, preſcribed to them, ſhould be abſolute and without exception. But in the more advanced period of youth, obſervation and reading will neceſſarily point out many deviations from theſe rules, not only in the converſation and conduct of their friends, but in the moſt applauded actions which hiſtory records. And when ſuch reflections ſuggeſt themſelves, it is a proof that the powers of the underſtanding are unfolded; and that it will be ſeaſonable to graft rational knowledge on the love of virtue. For to obviate error, is the firſt ſtep towards rectitude; and the abuſe of reaſon, in our moral

moral judgments, too frequently terminates in depravity of principle.

The author has, in general, given his authorities for the facts, which he has related, that hiſtoric truth may be diſtinguiſhed from the fictions, introduced for the ſake of illuſtration: But in the ſtory of the king of Navarre, afterwards Henry IV. of France, they have been unavoidably intermingled. The reference to Sully's Memoirs will, however, ſhew were the former ends, and the latter commences.

It is well known to the learned, that Socrates gave riſe to a new mode of inſtruction, in the ſchools of philoſophy; and that Plato and Xenophon, by recording the moral converſations of their amiable maſter, excited a taſte for dialogue, which has

has prevailed through all ſucceeding ages. The mode of exemplification, purſued in the preſent work, has neceſſarily occaſioned ſome deviation from each of theſe great originals; who are, indeed, themſelves ſo different, as to agree only in one common outline. But he has copied both in many particulars; eſpecially in the adoption of real characters, for the *dramatis perſonæ*, or ſpeakers in his diſcourſe. How far he has done juſtice to the talents or opinions of Philocles, it is not for him to determine. But if the ſentiments, imputed to his late honoured friend, be ſuch as he would not have avowed; let it be remembered, that Plato alſo wrote what Socrates diſclaimed; * and that the author alone is

* The LYSIS. When Socrates heard this dialogue of Plato read, in which he ſupported the

is anſwerable for whatever he has delivered.

The ESSAYS on the INFLUENCE of HABIT and ASSOCIATION; on INCONSISTENCY of EXPECTATION in LITERARY PURSUITS; on the ADVANTAGES of a TASTE for the GENERAL BEAUTIES of NATURE and of ART; and on the ALLIANCE of NATURAL HISTORY and PHILOSOPHY with POETRY, have been read before the LITERARY and PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, of Mancheſter, and honoured with a place in their journals. But in theſe ſeveral compoſitions, the diſcerning reader will perceive evident traits of paternal inſtruction: And that both

the principal character, "Gods!" he exclaimed, "how this young man makes me ſay what I "never thought!"

in

in the choice of the ſubjects, and in the experimental method of diſcuſſing them, he has had in view, the intereſts of thoſe, in whoſe improvement he is moſt nearly and tenderly concerned. They will therefore, he truſts, be deemed no improper ſequel to the SOCRATIC DISCOURSE.

The compoſition of a TRIBUTE to the MEMORY of CHARLES DE POLIER, ESQ. devolved upon him, as the friend of the deceaſed, and officially as preſident of the very reſpectable ſociety, which appointed this record of his merit. It was written under the impreſſion of heart-felt ſorrow; and on that account may, perhaps, be ſuſpected of exhibiting a picture, too ſtrong in its lineaments, and too glowing in its colours. But time, which calms every emotion,

and

and reſtores the due authority of judgment over imagination, has made no change in the author's ſentiments, concerning the character he has drawn. And the inſertion of it, in this work, whilſt it gratifies the feelings of his mind, is perfectly conſonant to the general deſign, which he has in view. For it offers a moſt inſtructive model to young men, who are animated with the laudable ambition of uniting liberal and polite manners, with the more ſolid attainments of learning and virtue.

The APPENDIX to the SOCRATIC DISCOURSE contains ſuch remarks and illuſtrations, as further reflection or reading have ſuggeſted, ſince that piece was written. The author is fully apprized of the peculiar delicacy and difficulty of the moral topics, which

which he has attempted to inveſtigate; and truſts, that he ſhall always be diſpoſed to acknowledge and to rectify any errors, into which he may have fallen. For he deems a return to truth and reaſon, more honourable than the poſſeſſion even of infallible judgment; and ſincerely adopts the ſentiment of a celebrated writer; "that the man, who is free "from miſtakes, can pretend to no "praiſe, except what is derived from "the juſtneſs of his underſtanding; "but that he, who corrects his miſ-"takes, diſplays at once, the juſtneſs "of his underſtanding, and the can-"dour of his heart."

MANCHESTER, *September* 1, 1783.

ERRATA.

Page	62,	line 15,	for Shakeſpear, *read* Shakeſpeare.
	92,	6,	authoriſed, *read* authorized.
	98,	7,	*id.* *id.*
	100,	13,	apologiſed, *read* apologized.
	107,	14,	philoſophiſing, *read* philoſophizing.
	110,	18,	Chimæras, *read* Chimeras.
	145,	Note,	Shakeſpear's, *read* Shakeſpeare's.
	147,	3,	characteriſed, *read* characterized.
	209,	23,	humaniſes, *read* humanizes.
	212,	14,	civiliſed, *read* civilized.
	248,	8,	lightenings, *read* lightnings.
	—	19,	*id.* *id.*
	249,	3,	Shakeſpear, *read* Shakeſpeare.
	319,	16,	authoriſed, *read* authorized.

N. B. The Author having ſuppreſſed ſeveral ſections, intended for inſertion in the Appendix, the references in the Socratic Diſcourſe, to pages 19, 20, 53, 76, 85, 102, 108, are conſequently erroneous.

TABLE

OF

CONTENTS.

	Page
SOCRATIC Diſcourſe on Truth. -	1
On the Influence of Habit and Aſſociation.	117
On Inconſiſtency of Expectation in Literary Purſuits. - - -	185
On a Taſte for the Beauties of Nature. -	201
On a Taſte for the Fine Arts. - -	211
On the Alliance of Natural Hiſtory with Poetry.	223
A Tribute to the Memory of Charles de Polier, Eſq. - - - - -	275

APPENDIX.

On true and falſe Honour. - -	291
On falſe Maxims of Morality. - -	298
On Fealty to Magiſtrates. - -	302
On falſe Opinions concerning Friendſhip. -	308
On Diſputation. - - -	309
On the indiſcriminate Pleadings of Lawyers.	329

A

SOCRATIC DISCOURSE

ON

TRUTH.

INTER SILVAS ACADEMI QUÆRERE VERUM.

HOR.

A

SOCRATIC DISCOURSE

ON

TRUTH.

TO

T. B. P.

YOU have often been a witneſs, my dear Son, of the pleaſure experienced by me, in the recollection of the Academical years, which I paſſed at ——— in the purſuit of general ſcience, before I engaged in my profeſſional ſtudies at the univerſity of ———. And you have no leſs frequently heard me expreſs the higheſt

veneration for the profound learning, and exalted character of Philocles, under whoſe tuition, the charms of knowledge firſt attracted my regard. I have lately reviſited thoſe ſcenes ſo delightful to my youth: But, leaving to your conception the emotions which I felt, I ſhall relate to you a SOCRATIC CONVERSATION, that occurred there in my preſence, between Philocles and your kinſman Sophron. This amiable youth, who is likely to reflect a luſtre on the ſacred office, to which, I truſt, he will ere long be called, had been reciting to his Profeſſor an Academical compoſition on the importance of TRUTH, and on the folly, infamy, and baſeneſs of LYING and DECEIT. And, when he laid down the book, Philocles expreſſed an earneſt wiſh, that ſuch ſentiments might ever influence the heart, and direct the conduct of his pupil. But general rules, continued he, are inſufficient for our government in the diverſified and complicated occurrences

of

of life: And, if we be ambitious of acting with wiſdom, honour, and virtue, it is neceſſary that we ſhould make ourſelves acquainted with the various branches and ſubordinations of each moral duty. Let us, therefore, take a particular view of TRUTH, and of her inſeparable companion FAITHFULNESS. You are no novice in theſe ſubjects; and Euphronius, I am perſuaded, will be pleaſed to hear you exerciſed in the diſcuſſion of them.

I preſume you will concur with me in opinion, that MORAL TRUTH is the *conformity of our expreſſions to our thoughts*; and FAITHFULNESS, *that of our actions to our expreſſions:* And that LYING OR FALSHOOD *is generally a mean, ſelfiſh, or malevolent, and always an unjuſtifiable endeavour to deceive another, by ſignifying or aſſerting that to be truth or fact, which is known or believed to be otherwiſe; and by making promiſes, without any intention to perform them.*

But, if we believe our aſſertions or ſigns to be true, and they ſhould afterwards prove to be falſe, tell me, Sophron, are we then guilty of Lying?

No, replied Sophron; we ſhall have committed only an error or miſtake: For under ſuch circumſtances, we muſt have been deceived ourſelves; and could have had no deſign of impoſing upon others.

But is every breach of promiſe a Lie, continued Philocles?

I ſhould think not, anſwered Sophron, if the promiſe were made with ſincerity, and the violation of it be unavoidable.

Your diſtinction is juſt, ſaid Philocles; and there are alſo certain conditions, obvious to the general ſenſe of mankind, underſtood or implied in almoſt every promiſe, on which the performance muſt depend. Whang-to, Emperor of China, who

who governed his people like a father, and regarded his own elevation and power as truſts delegated for their good, had a daughter who was his only child, and the darling of his old age. He promiſed her in marriage to Ouſan-quey, the ſon of his favourite mandarine, and that he would bequeath to him all his dominions as her dowry. Ouſan-quey was at that time a youth of the moſt promiſing abilities and diſpoſitions; but the proſpect of royalty, and the adulation of a court, ſoon corrupted his heart. He became haughty, inſolent, and cruel; and the people anticipated, with horror, the tyranny which they muſt endure under his government. By the inſtitutions of the Chineſe, the great officers of ſtate may remonſtrate to the emperor, when his decrees are injurious to the public intereſt; and this privilege has often tended to abate the rigour of deſpotiſm. Whang-to heard, with grief and aſtoniſhment, the complaints

of his mandarines againſt Ouſan-quey. He ſummoned him into his preſence, and being ſatisfied with the proofs of his demerit, he addreſſed the officers of ſtate in the following terms: "I engaged "my daughter in marriage, and pro- "miſed the inheritance of my dominions "to Ouſan-quey, a youth who was wiſe, "humane, and juſt. In departing from "virtue, he has cancelled theſe obliga- "tions, and forfeited his title to both." Then turning to Ouſan-quey, he ſaid, "I command you to retire from my "court, and to paſs the remainder of "your days in the moſt diſtant province "of my empire."

But is it not deemed peculiarly honourable, Sophron, to perform a promiſe, when paſſion or ſelf-intereſt ſtrongly incites us to the violation of it?

Nothing raiſes our admiration higher, ſaid Sophron; and I beg leave to relate

to

to you a ſtory, which places this truth in a very ſtriking point of view. A Spaniſh cavalier, without any reaſonable provocation, aſſaſſinated a Mooriſh gentleman, and inſtantly fled from juſtice. He was vigorouſly purſued; but availing himſelf of a ſudden turn in the road, he leaped, unperceived, over a garden wall. The proprietor, who was alſo a Moor, happened to be, at that time, walking in the garden; and the Spaniard fell upon his knees before him; acquainted him with his caſe, and in the moſt pathetic manner, implored concealment. The Moor liſtened to him with compaſſion, and generouſly promiſed his aſſiſtance. He then locked him in a ſummer-houſe, and left him, with an aſſurance that, when night approached, he would provide for his eſcape. A few hours afterwards, the dead body of his ſon was brought to him; and the deſcription of the murderer exactly agreed with the appearance of the

the Spaniard, whom he had then in cuſtody. He concealed the horror and ſuſpicion which he felt; and retiring to his chamber, remained there till midnight. Then, going privately into the garden, he opened the door of the ſummer-houſe, and thus accoſted the cavalier: "Chriſtian," ſaid he, "the youth "whom you have murdered was my "only ſon. Your crime merits the ſe-"vereſt puniſhment. But I have ſo-"lemnly pledged my word for your "ſecurity; and I diſdain to violate even "a raſh engagement with a cruel ene-"my." He conducted the Spaniard to the ſtables, and furniſhing him with one of his ſwifteſt mules, "Fly," ſaid he, "whilſt the darkneſs of the night con-"ceals you. Your hands are polluted "with blood; but GOD is juſt; and I "humbly thank him that my faith is "unſpotted, and that I have reſigned "judgment unto him."*

* See Hiſtor. Mirror.

When

When Sophron had finiſhed this narrative, I took the liberty of obſerving that Faithfulneſs is a virtue, which we ſometimes meet with in very abandoned characters, who are neither influenced by a ſenſe of religious, nor of moral obligation. In ſuch perſons it is founded on certain ideas of HONOUR, which originally ſpring from the beſt natural principles.* After the battle of Culloden, in the year 1745, a reward of thirty thouſand pounds was offered to any one, who ſhould diſcover or deliver up the young Pretender. He had taken refuge with the Kennedies, two common thieves; who protected him with fidelity; robbed for his ſupport; and often went in diſguiſe to Inverneſs, to buy proviſions for him. A conſiderable time afterwards, one of theſe men, who had reſiſted the temptation of thirty thouſand pounds, was hanged for ſtealing a cow, of the value of thirty ſhillings.†

* Vid. Appendix, Sect. I. † See Pennant's Tour in Scotland.

But

But I apprehend, reſumed Sophron, with much modeſty, that there are caſes in which it would be more culpable to fulfil, than to violate a promiſe.

To this propoſition Philocles gave his full aſſent, and illuſtrated it by the following ſuppoſititious caſe. A brace of loaded piſtols have been left in my hands by a friend, to whom I have engaged to reſtore them, whenever he ſhall make the demand. But if he claim them when intoxicated with liquor, or mad with paſſion and reſentment, it is evident that the performance of my promiſe would not only be weak, but extremely reprehenſible: And my friend himſelf, in his calm and ſober moments, would be amongſt the firſt to charge me with all the miſchiefs, occaſioned by my erroneous ſenſe of duty. Haſty declarations and raſh aſſeverations are ſometimes made by good men, who cannot however reaſonably or conſcientiouſly

tiouſly fulfil them. When Jeſus had waſhed the feet of ſeveral of his diſciples, he came to Simon Peter: "*And* "*Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, doſt thou* "*waſh my feet? Jeſus anſwered and ſaid,* "*What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but* "*thou ſhalt know hereafter. Peter ſaid unto* "*him, Thou ſhalt never waſh my feet!* "*Jeſus anſwered him, If I waſh thee not,* "*thou haſt no part with me. Simon Peter* "*ſaid unto him, Lord, not my feet only,* "*but alſo my hands and my head.*"* Nor can even vows, however ſolemn, be binding, when the object of them is the commiſſion of a crime. For though appeals to the Deity are ſacred pledges of our ſincerity, they make no change in the nature or legality of actions. And it would be the groſſeſt ſuperſtition to ſuppoſe, that the violation of God's ordinances can either be honourable, or acceptable to him.† David, in revenge for an inſult offered him

* John, Chap. xiii. † See Appendix, Sect II.

by

by Nabal, vowed that he would put to the ſword every male of his family. But his wrath was afterwards appeaſed; and he became ſo ſenſible of the injuſtice of his deſign, that he ſaid, "*Bleſſed* "*be the* LORD, *who has kept his ſervant* "*from evil.*"*

It ſhould ſeem, that the Roman emperor Trajan thought it might be criminal in his officers, under certain circumſtances, to maintain the allegiance which they had ſworn to him.† On the appointment of Suberanus to be captain of the royal guard, he preſented him with a ſword, as the badge of his fealty, ſaying, "Let this be drawn in "my defence, if I rule according to "equity; but if otherwiſe, it may be "employed againſt me." ‡

* 1 Sam. xxv. 22.

† See Appendix, Sect. III. ‡ Plin.

The

The concluſion concerning the obſervance of promiſes, may be extended to Veracity, notwithſtanding the extravagant declaration of one of the Fathers, "that he would not violate truth, though "he were ſure to gain heaven by it." Whenever, from the concurrence of extraordinary circumſtances, the practice of one virtue is rendered incompatible with the performance of another, of much higher obligation, it is evident that the inferior muſt yield to the ſuperior duty. An example will elucidate, and evince the juſtneſs of this obſervation.

After the horrid maſſacre of the Huguenots in France, which began on St. Bartholomew's day, 1572, the king of Navarre was very rigorouſly guarded, by the order of the queen-mother, Catharine de Medicis. But one day, when he was hunting near Senlis, during the heat of the chace, he ſeized a favourable opportunity

opportunity of making his eſcape; and galloping through the woods, with a few faithful friends, amongſt whom was young Roſny, afterwards duke of Sully, he croſſed the Seine at Poiſſy,* and fled to the caſtle of a nobleman, who was a zealous, though ſecret proteſtant, and ſtrongly attached to his intereſt. Troops of horſe were ſoon diſpatched, different ways, in purſuit of him. One of theſe detachments ſtopped at the gates of the caſtle, where Henry was then refreſhing himſelf; and the captain demanded permiſſion to ſearch for him, ſhewing the royal mandate to bring the head of Henry, and to put his attendants to the ſword. Reſiſtance was evidently vain; and compliance would have been a breach of hoſpitality, friendſhip, and humanity; at the ſame time that it muſt have proved fatal to the intereſts of the reformed religion, and to the whole body of proteſtants

* See Sully's Memoirs; and alſo the Preface to this work.

in

in France, who had no other protector but the king of Navarre. The nobleman, therefore, without hesitation, and with an undaunted countenance, instantly said, "Waste not your time, Sir, "in fruitless searches. The king of "Navarre, with his friends, passed this "way about two hours ago; and if you "set spurs to your horse, you will over-"take him before the night approaches." The captain and his troop, satisfied with this answer, rode off at full speed; and the king was then left at liberty to provide for his safety, by disguising himself, and taking a different rout.

Under such circumstances, as you have described, all mankind, observed Sophron, would condemn a strict adherence to TRUTH.* But what do you think

* *Insani sapiens nomen ferat, æquus iniqui*
Ultra quam satis est, virtutem si petat ipsam.
Hor. Ep. VI. Lib. I. V. 15.

think of the conduct of the Portugueſe ſlave, whoſe breach of veracity, and even perjury, is extolled by Abbé Raynal, in his Hiſtory of the European Settlements. This negro, who had fled into the woods to enjoy the liberty which was his natural right, having learned that his old maſter was arreſted, and likely to be condemned for a capital

That which being done admits of a rational juſtification, is the eſſence, or general character, of a MORAL DUTY. DIALOGUE CONCERNING HAPPINESS, by JAMES HARRIS, Eſq. p. 175.

The right to truth may be forfeited in particular caſes, as by one who hath formed a deſign to kill another, and, if not hindered, will probably accompliſh his wicked purpoſe. Neither the perſon whoſe life is aimed at, ſhould he ſave himſelf by a lie, nor any one who ſhould tell an officious lie for him, will be guilty of the leaſt injuſtice to him, whom, by this means, they keep from perpetrating the miſchief intended. Inſtead of a wrong, it is a kindneſs. GROVE'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY, Vol. II. p. 415.

Adhering to the *ordinary* rules of duty, in theſe *extraordinary* caſes, may ſometimes occaſion greater evils to our country, or to mankind, than all the virtues, any one mortal can exert, will repair. HUTCHESON'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY, Vol. II. 4to. p 117. See a farther diſcuſſion of this ſubject, in the Appendix, Sect. IV. Conſult alſo Geneſis, Chap. xii.

crime,

crime, came into the court of juſtice; aſſumed the guilt of the fact; ſuffered himſelf to be impriſoned; brought falſe, though judicial proofs of his crime; and was executed inſtead of his beloved maſter.

The diſapprobation of falſhood, in this inſtance, anſwered Philocles, is ſuppreſſed for a while, by our admiration of the affection, gratitude, generoſity, and greatneſs of mind diſplayed by the negro. We lament the bondage of ſuch a hero; and regret that his exalted virtues were not diſplayed on a more important and honourable occaſion. But when theſe firſt emotions are over, and we diſpaſſionately reflect on the conduct of the ſlave, we muſt condemn it as an unjuſtifiable ſacrifice of truth, of his own life, and of the duty which he owed to ſociety.* The divine command, "*Thou* "*ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs* AGAINST *thy*

* See Appendix, Sect. V.

"*neighbour*," cannot ſurely be ſuppoſed to imply, that he may bear *falſe witneſs in his* FAVOUR; becauſe this would be to forbid private injury, and to authoriſe public wrongs. Judicial teſtimony, in the preſent circumſtances of the moral world, is eſſential to the well-being of ſociety; and to leſſen the general credibility of it, by introducing into courts of law falſhood and perjury, is a high crime againſt the ſtate, and ſeverely puniſhed in all countries which have emerged from barbariſm.* Beſides, the good of the community requires that juſtice ſhould be executed on the offender himſelf, to prevent him from committing other crimes: And it would give encouragement to vice, if an innocent perſon, perhaps tired of life, or influenced by enthuſiaſtic notions of honour, friendſhip, or love, might ſuffer for another who is guilty.

* See Appendix, Sect. VI.

The

The certainty of puniſhment, even in miſdemeanors, is ſtrongly urged by the Marquis de Beccaria, the great advocate for judicial lenity. And he thinks the forgiveneſs of the injured party himſelf, ſhould not interrupt the execution of juſtice. "This may be an act of good-"nature and humanity," he obſerves, "but it is contrary to the good of the "public. For although a private citi-"zen may diſpenſe with ſatisfaction for "his private injury, he cannot remove "the neceſſity of public example. The "right of puniſhing belongs not to any "individual in particular, but to the "ſociety in general, or the ſovereign "who repreſents that ſociety: And a "man may renounce his own portion of "this right, but he cannot give up that "of others."

The conduct of the negro, ſaid Sophron, however erroneous it might be in point of wiſdom, or unjuſtifiable with

reſpect to its morality, was perfectly generous and diſintereſted. But the ſame elegant writer, who records this fact, has related another example of the violation of truth, from motives purely *ſelfiſh*, which I cannot condemn, though I know not how to juſtify. I will endeavour to recollect, and to repeat the ſtory. A Britiſh ſerjeant was taken priſoner by the ſavages in America; who prepared themſelves to put him to death, with all the barbarity which their ſkill in torture could invent. Shocked with the view of the horrid ſufferings which awaited him, he thus addreſſed the Indians: "Mighty "warriors, your preparations are vain, "for my body is invulnerable; and if "you will ſet me at liberty, I will teach "you how to become ſo. Think not "that I impoſe upon you by falſe pre-"tenſions. I am willing that you ſhould "try upon me an experiment, which "may ſatisfy your doubts. Let the chief,

"who

" who holds my hanger, now ſtrike with " all his force. I equally defy the ſharp- " neſs of the inſtrument, and the ſtrength " of his arm." Whilſt he was ſaying theſe words, he bent his head, and laid bare his neck. The Indian eagerly advanced; and by one furious blow, ſevered the head from the body. Thus the poor ſerjeant, by his preſence of mind, exchanged lingering tortures for an eaſy and inſtantaneous death.

Euphronius here remarked, that the ſtory is of doubtful authority, by the confeſſion of the Abbé himſelf. But admitting the truth of it, continued he, for the ſake of argument, what moraliſt can be ſo rigid as not to deem the conduct of the ſerjeant at leaſt excuſable? Perhaps no man, in ſimilar circumſtances, would have acted differently, if he poſſeſſed ſufficient compoſure to deviſe, or addreſs to practiſe ſuch an expedient. The caſe is not analogous to that of

martyrdom for religion. The horrid ſufferings to be endured, in this inſtance, could anſwer no good end; and ſociety received not the leaſt injury, either immediate or remote, by the evaſion of them.

Recollecting an hiſtorical fact of unqueſtionable truth, and ſtrictly applicable to the point in debate, I requeſted permiſſion to relate it. When Columbus and his crew were caſt away on an iſland, more than thirty leagues from Hiſpaniola, nothing remained to them in proſpect, but to end their miſerable days with naked ſavages, far from their country and their friends. To add to theſe calamities, the natives began ſoon to murmur at the reſidence of the Spaniards amongſt them; the ſupport of whom became burthenſome to men, ignorant of agriculture, and unaccuſtomed to exertion or induſtry: They brought in proviſions with reluctance, furniſhed them ſparingly, and

and even threatened entirely to withhold them. Such a reſolution muſt have occaſioned inevitable deſtruction to the Spaniards; but Columbus prevented it by a happy device, that revived all the admiration and reverence, with which the Indians firſt regarded theſe ſtrangers. By his ſkill in aſtronomy, he knew there was ſhortly to be a total eclipſe of the moon. On the day before it happened, he aſſembled the principal perſons of the diſtrict, and after reproaching them for their defection from thoſe, whom they had lately revered, he told them that the Spaniards were ſervants of the Great Spirit, who dwells in heaven: That, offended at their refuſal to ſupport the objects of his peculiar favour, the Deity was preparing to puniſh their crime with exemplary ſeverity; and that the moon ſhould be darkened that very night, and aſſume a bloody hue, as a ſign of the Divine wrath, and an emblem of the vengeance ready to fall on them. To this

this marvellous prediction, ſome of the barbarians liſtened with careleſs indifference; others, with credulous aſtoniſhment: But when the moon began gradually to withdraw her light, and at length appeared of a red colour, all were ſtruck with terror. They ran with conſternation to their houſes, and returning to Columbus loaded with proviſions, threw them inſtantly at his feet, conjuring him to intercede with the Great Spirit, to avert the deſtruction with which they were threatened. Columbus, ſeeming to be moved by their intreaties, promiſed to comply with their deſire. The eclipſe went off, the moon recovered its ſplendour; and from that time, the Spaniards were not only furniſhed profuſely with proviſions, but treated with the moſt ſuperſtitious attention.* This ſolemn deceit of Columbus may be juſtified by the rights of neceſſity. Shipwrecked on a diſtant coaſt, in the proſe-

* See Robertſon's Hiſt. of America, Vol. I. Book 2.

cution

cution of an enterprize, which, in his mind, appears to have originated from honourable and uſeful views, and deſtitute of every means of ſupplying himſelf and his aſſociates with ſuſtenance, he had a claim to the protection, aſſiſtance, and ſupport of the people who were ſpectators of his calamity. And it was a happy fertility of genius, which ſuggeſted to him an expedient, far preferable to the force of arms. But I feel a ſecret wiſh, that this truly great man had mixed leſs of falſity with his artifice. He might have reprehended the Indians for their want of hoſpitality, alarmed their fears by his prediction, and excited their wonder and reverence by its fulfilment, without denouncing, in ſuch unguarded terms, the immediate vengeance of Heaven. Truth is ſo important, and of ſo delicate a nature, that every poſſible precaution ſhould be employed to extenuate its violation, although the ſacrifice be made to duties which ſuperſede its obligation.

Philocles

Philocles very obligingly thanked me for recalling to his memory ſo pertinent a fact. He then turned to his pupil, and aſked him what he thought of the maxim, which ſome perſons have adopted, "that "faith is not to be kept with rogues "or traitors?"

I think the maxim, replied Sophron, falſe in itſelf, and highly injurious to ſociety. For, independent of the licentiouſneſs and cruelty, to which it might give riſe, a man owes to his own honour and peace of mind, except on very extraordinary occaſions, the ſtrict performance of his promiſe. And this opinion ſeems to have influenced the conduct of the great Viſcount Turenne, and of Sir Richard Herbert. The former was attacked one night by robbers near Paris, who ſtripped him of his money, watch, and rings. He engaged to give them a hundred *louis d'ors*, if they would return him a ring, of little intrinſic worth, but

but on which he ſet a particular value. The highwaymen complied; and one of them had the boldneſs to go to his houſe the ſucceeding day, and in the midſt of a large company to demand, in a whiſper, the performance of his promiſe. The Viſcount gave orders for the money to be paid; and ſuffered the villain to eſcape, before he related the adventure.*

Sir Richard Herbert, being ſent by Edward the Fourth, to reduce certain rebels in North Wales, laid ſiege to Harlech caſtle, in Merionethſhire; a fortreſs ſo ſtrong, that he deſpaired of taking it but by blockade and famine. The captain of it offered to ſurrender, on condition that Sir Richard *would do what he could to ſave his life.* The condition was accepted; and Sir Richard brought the commander to the king, requeſting his majeſty to grant him a pardon, as the expectation of this favour

* See Ramſay's Life of Turenne.

had

had induced him to yield up an important caſtle, which he might have defended. Edward replied to Sir Richard Herbert, "That as he had no power, "by his commiſſion, to pardon any one, "he might therefore, after the repre- "ſentation hereof to his ſovereign, de- "liver him up to juſtice." Sir Richard Herbert anſwered, "He had not yet "done *the beſt he could for him*; and "therefore moſt humbly deſired his "highneſs to do one of two things; "either to put him again in the caſtle "where he had been, and command "ſome other to take him out; or, if "his highneſs would not do ſo, to take "his life for the captain's, that being "the laſt proof he could give, that he "had uſed his utmoſt endeavour to "fulfil his promiſe." The king, finding himſelf ſo much urged, pardoned the captain, but beſtowed on Sir Richard Herbert no other reward for his ſervice.*

* See the Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury.

Theſe

Theſe gentlemen, ſaid Philocles, diſplayed a delicate ſenſe of honour; and, though I am dubious, whether the conduct of Monſieur Turenne has the ſanction of the great Roman caſuiſt,* yet, according to my judgment, both he and Sir Richard Herbert acted conformably to the laws of reaſon and rectitude. For every *lawful* promiſe, made by one poſſeſſing preſence of mind, and the free uſe of reaſon, no event or conſideration ſucceeding, which an unbiaſſed underſtanding would deem ſufficient to render it *unlawful*, ought to be religiouſly obſerved.† But promiſes, extorted by fear, and that clearly contravene our duty to ſociety, are void in themſelves: Thus an engagement made with ſincerity, under the ſtrong impreſſions of terror, to a highwayman or murderer,

* *Si prædonibus pactum pro capite pretium non attuleris, nulla fraus eſt, ne ſi juratus quidem id non feceris.* Cic. de Off. Lib. III. Cap. 29.

† See Grove's Mor. Philoſophy.

not

not to bear teſtimony againſt him, can be of no validity; becauſe there ſubſiſts an antecedent claim of the community, which cannot be diſpenſed with by any of its members. I have ſuppoſed the engagement to be ſincere; for, if entered into with a previous deſign of violation, a breach of truth and faithfulneſs is in ſome degree committed, notwithſtanding its injuſtice or illegality.

But when you deliver to another as a certain truth, what you believe to be falſe, are you guilty of lying, ſhould it afterwards prove to be true?

Yes, anſwered Sophron; becauſe my intention is to deceive, and to make a ſuppoſed falſhood paſs for truth. Chian-fu was an officer in the guards of the emperor of Japan. He had formed a tender connection with one of the ladies of the court, and was on the point of marriage, when a formidable

inſurrection,

inſurrection, in a diſtant iſland of the empire, occaſioned by the tyranny and cruel exactions of the government, obliged him to leave the capital without delay, to aſſume his poſt in the royal army. The war was protracted through various cauſes; and he bore with great impatience ſo long an abſence from his miſtreſs. By the influence of a bribe, he obtained permiſſion from the commander in chief to return to Jeddo, for a few weeks; during which time he hoped to celebrate his nuptials. But dreading leſt the emperor ſhould reſent his deſertion of the army, at ſo critical a conjuncture, he pretended that he brought tidings, from the general, of an important advantage, gained over the enemy; which was likely ſoon to be ſucceeded by a complete victory. Theſe accounts were founded on probability, not on truth. His falſhoods, however, procured him the moſt favourable reception at court. He married the lady; and

after a week ſpent in feſtivity, prepared for his departure to join the army. An expreſs at this time arrived, with the news of the entire defeat of the inſurgents; but no mention was made of any previous diſpatches by Chian-fu. The emperor ſuſpected that he had been guilty of deceit. He was ſtrictly examined; confeſſed his crime, and the motives of it; and was condemned to ſuffer immediate death. For lying is a capital offence, by the laws of Japan.

If truth, reſumed Philocles, be an agreement between our words and thoughts, are you under an obligation to expreſs all your thoughts?

No, ſaid Sophron, prudence often forbids it; and it is no violation of truth to conceal thoſe thoughts, or that knowledge, with which another has no right to be acquainted. On a particular occaſion, the Jews demanded of

Jeſus,

Jeſus, "*What ſign ſheweſt thou unto us?* "*Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Deſtroy this tem-* "*ple, and in three days I will raiſe it up.* "*Then ſaid the Jews, Forty and ſix years* "*was this temple in building, and wilt thou* "*rear it up in three days? But he ſpake of* "*the temple of his body. When therefore he* "*was ariſen from the dead, his diſciples* "*remembered that he had ſaid this unto* "*them.*" *

Sometimes, when improper or treacherous queſtions are aſked, ſilence would be no leſs dangerous, than an explicit declaration of our ſentiments. In theſe caſes, we ſhall be juſtified in the uſe of ſuch evaſions, as do not contradict the truth. When the chief prieſts and ſcribes inquired of our Saviour, whether it was lawful to pay tribute unto Cæſar? "*He perceived their crafti-* "*neſs, and ſaid unto them, Why tempt ye* "*me? Shew me a penny: Whoſe image*

* John, Chap. ii. Ver. 18.

" *and ſuperſcription hath it? They anſwered*
" *and ſaid, Cæſar's. And he ſaid unto them,*
" *Render unto Cæſar the things which be*
" *Cæſar's, and unto* GOD *the things which*
" *be* GOD'*s. And they could not take hold*
" *of his words before the people: And they*
" *marvelled at his anſwers, and held their*
" *peace.*"

Under the reign of the cruel and bigoted queen Mary, the princeſs Elizabeth, her ſiſter, ſuffered a variety of perſecutions, on account of her ſteady attachment to the proteſtant religion. It is ſaid, ſhe was one day interrogated concerning the Lord's Supper; and that ſhe returned the following prudent, and evaſive anſwer:

" Chriſt was the word that ſpake it;
" He took the bread and brake it;
" And what the word did make it,
" That I believe and take it." *

* Walpole's Cat. of Royal and Noble Authors.

Philocles

Philocles expreſſed much ſatisfaction in the judicious diſtinction, which his pupil had made, and obſerved, that the conduct of the princeſs Elizabeth is fully juſtified by the example of the apoſtle Paul, in circumſtances not very diſſimilar. The Athenians had a law, which rendered it capital to promulgate any new divinities.* And when Paul preached to them JESUS and the RESURRECTION, he was accuſed of having broken this law, and of being a "*ſetter forth of ſtrange Gods*;" and was carried before the Areopagus, a court of judicature, which took cogniſance of all criminal matters, and was, in a particular manner, charged with the care of the eſtabliſhed religion. An impoſtor, in ſuch a ſituation, would have retracted his doctrine to ſave his life; and an enthuſiaſt would have ſacrificed his life, without attempting to ſave it by innocent means. But the Apoſtle wiſely avoided

* Socrates ſuffered under this law.

both extremes; and availing himſelf of an inſcription "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD," which he had ſeen upon an altar in the city, he pleaded in his own defence, "*Whom ye ignorantly worſhip, him declare I unto you.*" By this preſence of mind, he evaded the law, and eſcaped condemnation, without departing from the truth of the Goſpel, or violating the honour of GOD.*

Though I am no general admirer, continued Philocles, of the maxims of morality delivered by Lord Cheſterfield, yet I think his remarks on the preſent ſubject peculiarly worthy of attention. "The prudence and neceſſity," ſays the noble author, "of frequently concealing "the truth, inſenſibly ſeduces people to "violate it. It is the only art of mean "capacities, and the only refuge of mean "ſpirits. Whereas concealing the truth,

* Vid. Acts xvii. 23. Alſo Lord Lyttelton's Obſervations on the Converſion and Apoſtleſhip of St. Paul.

"upon

" upon proper occaſions, is as prudent
" and as innocent, as telling a lie, upon
" any occaſion, is infamous and fooliſh.
" I will ſtate you a caſe in your own
" department. Suppoſe you are em-
" ployed at a foreign court, and that
" the miniſter of that court is abſurd or
" impertinent enough to aſk you, what
" your inſtructions are; will you tell
" him a lie, which as ſoon as found out,
" and found out it certainly will be,
" muſt deſtroy your credit, blaſt your
" character, and render you uſeleſs there?
" No. Will you tell him the truth then,
" and betray your truſt? As certainly,
" No. But you will anſwer, with firm-
" neſs, That you are ſurpriſed at ſuch
" a queſtion; that you are perſuaded he
" does not expect an anſwer to it; but
" that at all events he certainly will not
" have one. Such an anſwer will give
" him confidence in you; he will con-
" ceive an opinion of your veracity, of
" which opinion you may afterwards
" make very honeſt and fair advantages."

Philocles proceeded to interrogate his pupil, whether falſity, when in jeſt, is to be deemed a lie? But Sophron declined the queſtion, as too nice for his deciſion; and deſired to hear the ſentiments of Philocles, who delivered them in the following terms. Wit and irony, raillery and humour, are often deviations from the ſtrict rules of veracity: But they are allowed by common conſent; and, under proper reſtrictions, they contribute to enliven converſation, and to improve our manners. But jocularity is certainly culpable, and may be deemed a ſpecies of lying, when it is intended to deceive, without any good end in view; and eſpecially with the ungenerous one of diverting ourſelves at the painful expence of another. The practice alſo may lead to more criminal falſhoods; and it is related with honour of Ariſtides, that he held truth to be ſo ſacred, *ut ne joco quidem mentiretur.*

Some

Some jocular lies have produced the moſt ſerious and affecting conſequences; of which I will give you an example or two, in the youthful frolics of Hilario, a nobleman who now looks back, with ſorrow and regret, on the ſufferings occaſioned by his levity. When he was a ſtudent at Cambridge, he went at midnight crying *fire, fire!* to the chamber door of one of the fellows of ———, a gentleman univerſally admired for his literary and poetical abilities, but who was of a timid and melancholy diſpoſition. The gentleman awaked out of a ſound ſleep, and, attentive only to the firſt ſuggeſtions of fear, leaped through the window, at the hazard of loſing his life by the fall. Not long after this tranſaction, Hilario went up to London; and dining in a mixed company of perſons of faſhion, he happened to ſit near a grave old gentleman, who took the firſt opportunity of making particular inquiries concerning a youth, then at Cambridge,

Cambridge, whom he knew to be intimately acquainted with this nobleman. Hilario inſtantly ſuſpected, that the ſerious Don was a rich uncle of his friend; and determined that he would give ſuch an account of the nephew, as ſhould occaſion a ſolemn letter of reproof, over which he hoped to regale himſelf, on his return to college. He therefore jocularly ſaid, that his companion was a fine jolly fellow, always forming connections with the girls; that he loved to rattle the dice; and that he had lately loſt his next quarter's allowance, which would lower his courage at play, for ſome time to come. From the alteration which he perceived in the ſtranger's countenance, he was aſſured of the ſucceſs of his *hum*, an abſurd term given to this ſhameful kind of lie: And, when he got back to Cambridge, he haſtened to the apartment of his friend, to enjoy the laughter which he ſhould raiſe at his expence. But how was he ſhocked

to

to find him in the delirium of a fever, occaſioned by a billet, which had been delivered the preceding day, purporting, "That Lucinda had juſt beſtowed her "hand, upon a perſon much more de- "ſerving of her affections, than he had "been repreſented to her father by Hi- "lario, his aſſociate in pleaſure, extrava- "gance, and profligacy."

By ſuch thoughtleſs, and unjuſtifiable violations of truth, Hilario was often wounding his own peace of mind, and involving his connections in diſtreſs. He was, however, at length compelled to correct this criminal habit, through the horror which he felt, on having given riſe to a fatal duel between two brothers, by jocularly inſinuating to one of them, that he was rivalled in the affections of his miſtreſs, by the other.

It would be happy, ſaid I, if we could aſcertain the reſtrictions, under which theſe

theſe ſallies of frolic and jocularity may be indulged with innocence. One general rule may, I think, be admitted, that the entertainment, which we thus create to ourſelves, ſhould be ſuch only as will be a future ſubject of mirth even to thoſe, who are the preſent ſufferers by it. But, to uſe the words of an excellent moraliſt, "as every action may "produce effects, over which human "power has no influence, and which "human ſagacity cannot foreſee; we "ſhould not lightly venture to the verge "of evil; nor ſtrike at others, though "with a reed, leſt, like the rod of Moſes, "it become a ſerpent in our hands."*

Philocles now purſued the ſubject, by inquiring into the nature of EQUIVOCATION; which Sophron defined to be a mean expedient to avoid the declaration of truth, without verbally telling a lie. An equivocation, ſaid he, conſiſts of

* Dr. Hawkſworth.

ſuch

ſuch expreſſions, as admit of more than one meaning. The ſpeaker uſes them in one ſenſe, and deſigns that the hearer ſhould underſtand them in another. Cicero mentions a certain perſon, who made a truce with the enemy for thirty days, and treacherouſly evaded his agreement, by laying waſte the country during the nights; alledging, that the truce was for ſo many *days*, not nights.* Such an equivocation as this, has all the guilt, and infamy of a lie; but I do not feel myſelf inclined to condemn the duplicity, practiſed by a gentleman, on the following occaſion. He was returning home from the aſſizes at York, and was attacked on the road by a highwayman, to whom he delivered a ſmall purſe of money. The robber told him, that he ſhould not be ſatisfied with a few guineas; and ſternly demanded the ſum, which he knew he had received, and then carried about him. The

* Vid. Cicero de Officiis, Lib. I. Cap. 13.

gentleman,

gentleman, with great apparent terror, drew out of his pocket a leathern bag, and giving it to the highwayman, ſaid, "*Take what you want*, but ſpare my life." The robber eagerly received it, and was tranſported with the value of his acquiſition. He rode off with it, through bye lanes, till he arrived at a place of ſecurity. There he ſtopped to examine his booty, which to his aſtoniſhment he found to conſiſt only of a quantity of halfpence, together with a copy of the dying ſpeech and earneſt exhortations of a malefactor, who had been executed the preceding day for robbery.

Can you acquit me, Philocles, ſaid I, of the criminality of equivocation, when, in the exerciſe of my profeſſional duties, I ſtudy, by cheerful looks and ambiguous words, to remove from my patients the horrors of deſpair, to mitigate the apprehenſions of danger, and to deceive them into hope; that, by adminiſtering a cordial

a cordial to the drooping ſpirit, I may ſmooth the bed of death, or revive even expiring life? For there are maladies, which rob the Philoſopher of fortitude, and the Chriſtian of conſolation.

From my heart I acquit you, anſwered Philocles, with his wonted humanity. You do a kindneſs, not a wrong, to the perſon whom you thus deceive; and may reaſonably preſuppoſe his future approbation of that conduct, which meets with the preſent acquieſcence of all his friends. The amiable and elegant Pliny, who had the niceſt ſenſe of honour, recites with applauſe, in a letter to Nepos, a ſtory, which may perhaps contribute to ſatisfy your mind, and remove your ſcruples.

The huſband of the celebrated Arria, Cæcinna Pætus, was very dangerouſly ill. Her ſon was alſo ſick at the ſame time; and died. He was a youth of uncommon

uncommon accompliſhments, and fondly beloved by his parents. Arria prepared and conducted his funeral in ſuch a manner, that her huſband remained entirely ignorant of the mournful event, which occaſioned that ſolemnity. Pætus often inquired, with anxiety, about his ſon; to whom ſhe cheerfully replied, that he had ſlept well, and was better. But if her tears, too long reſtrained, were burſting forth, ſhe inſtantly retired, to give vent to her grief; and when again compoſed, ſhe returned to Pætus with dry eyes, and a placid countenance, quitting, as it were, all the tender feelings of the mother, at the threſhold of her huſband's chamber.*

But, addreſſing himſelf to Sophron, is it not a ſpecies of equivocation, and a breach of faithfulneſs, continued Philocles, when we do not perform our promiſes, according to the plain and obvious meaning of them?

* Plin. Epiſt. XVI. Lib. III.

Without

Without doubt it is, anſwered Sophron. The moraliſt whom I before quoted, relates, that ten Romans, who had been taken in the battle of Cannæ, were ſent by Hannibal to the ſenate, to propoſe an exchange of priſoners. Before they ſet out, each of them engaged, by an oath, to return to the camp of the Carthaginians, if the embaſſy ſhould prove ineffectual. The ſenate rejected the offers of Hannibal; and nine of the priſoners honourably rendered themſelves up to him. But the tenth refuſed to return, on pretence, that he had already diſcharged himſelf of his oath. For it ſeems, that he went back to the camp of the Carthaginians, ſoon after he quitted it, to fetch ſome neceſſaries, which he had deſignedly left behind, that he might be able to plead his having complied, literally, with the terms of his engagement. But the ſenate diſdained the deceit, and commanded the artful wretch to be ſent bound to Hannibal.

Mental, and other private reſervations neither abſolve, nor even extenuate the guilt of lying. When the unfortunate Mary queen of Scotland was married to the dauphin of France, the king, his father, ſolemnly ratified every article, inſiſted upon by the Scotch parliament, for preſerving the independence of their nation, and for ſecuring the ſucceſſion of the crown to the houſe of Hamilton. But Mary, by his perſuaſion, had antecedently and privately ſubſcribed three deeds, by which, ſhe conſigned the kingdom of Scotland, on failure of her own iſſue, to his family; declaring all her promiſes, to the contrary, to be void.* The remark of Biſhop Taylor may be adopted, as the beſt comment on tranſactions of this infamous nature. If the words be a *lie* without *reſervation*, they are ſo with it: For this does not alter the words themſelves; nor the meaning

* Lord Kaims's Hiſtory of Man, Vol. IV. p. 158.

of

of the words; nor the purpoſe of him who delivers them.*

But in what light are we to regard the ſtratagems, falſhood, and acts of deceit, which have been employed in war, and often with applauſe, both in ancient and modern times?

In reply to this intereſting queſtion, Philocles obſerved, that war is ſeldom founded in juſtice; and that, therefore, we cannot be ſurpriſed that it ſhould occaſion, amongſt thoſe who wage it, a ſuſpenſion of the common laws of morality. The fraudulent exploits which are practiſed, by the tacit conſent, as it were, of the parties, may dazzle and ſurpriſe a ſuperficial obſerver; but a ſerious, honeſt mind, will generally condemn them, as inconſiſtent with the obligations of religion and virtue; and, except under very particular circum-

* Ductor Dubitant. p. 498.

ſtances, injurious to the contending powers themſelves. For, as integrity is the beſt policy in the conduct of individuals towards each other, it will appear to be equally ſo in the tranſactions between ſtates, and communities, if an extenſive view be taken of their great and permanent intereſts. Cicero, in one of his dialogues, introduces Scipio as maintaining the following excellent maxim: *non modo* FALSUM *eſſe illud,* SINE INJURIA *non poſſe, ſed hoc veriſſimum, ſine* SUMMA JUSTITIA *rempublicam regi non poſſe.* "It is ſo far from being true, that "government cannot be carried on with- "out injury to others, that nothing is "more certain, than that it cannot be "well adminiſtered without an inviolable "adherence to the ſtricteſt juſtice." And the propriety of this obſervation ſeems to be acknowledged, in ſome of the regulations of war, now univerſally adopted in civilized countries.

But

But a diſtinction ſhould be made, between art or ſtratagem, and perfidy or falſhood.* The wiſeſt and beſt moraliſts admit, that we may deceive our enemies, when we have a juſt cauſe of war, by any ſuch ſigns, as import no profeſſion of communicating our ſentiments to them. Thus I have heard, that the duke of Marlborough, when he commanded the allied army in Germany, called a council of war, on a particular occaſion, to determine whether he ſhould attack the enemy on the ſucceeding day. His general officers were unanimous in recommending the meaſure; but the duke expreſſed his objections to it in the ſtrongeſt terms; and the council ſubmitted to his ſuperior judgment. When he retired into his tent, prince Eugene followed him, and lamented the diſgrace, in which ſuch a deciſion would involve them. "My reſolution," ſaid the duke, "is fixed to give battle to-

* See Appendix, Sect. VII.

" morrow; and I ſhall inſtantly iſſue " the neceſſary orders. But I oppoſed " this plan in council, becauſe I had re- " ceived ſecret information, that our " enemies had concerted the means of " becoming acquainted with the reſult " of our deliberations. And you will " agree with me in the neceſſity of de- " ceiving them."

But men of true courage and honour, muſt hold in deteſtation all treachery and falſhood. The earl of Peterborough, in conjunction with the prince of Darmſtadt, carried on the ſiege of Barcelona, about the beginning of the preſent century. The governor offered to capitulate, and came to a parley with lord Peterborough at the gates of the city. The articles were not yet ſigned; when ſuddenly loud ſhouts and huzzas were heard in the town. " You have perfidiouſly be- trayed us!" ſaid the governor to the earl: " Whilſt we are capitulating, with un-

" ſuſpecting

"ſuſpecting honour and ſincerity, your "Engliſh ſoldiers have entered the city "by the ramparts; and are now com- "mitting rapine, murder, and every kind "of violence." "You do injuſtice to "the Engliſh," replied the general: "This treachery is chargeable only on "the troops of Darmſtadt. But permit "me to enter into the town with my "ſoldiers, and I will inſtantly repreſs "the outrage, and return to the gate "to finiſh the capitulation."

The offer was made with an air of truth, and ſincerity; and accepted with a generous confidence. Peterborough haſtened into the ſtreets, where he found the Germans and Catalans pillaging the houſes of the principal inhabitants. He drove them away; and obliged them to leave the booty, which they were carrying off: And, after having quieted all diſturbances, he rejoined the governor, and completed the capitulation, without de-

manding any new, or more advantageous terms. The Spaniards were aſtoniſhed at the magnanimity of the Engliſh, whom they had generally regarded before as faithleſs barbarians.*

Sophron remarked, that the glory, on this occaſion, appeared to belong chiefly to lord Peterborough, as an individual. But I recollect, continued he, a tranſaction in the Grecian hiſtory, which ſeems to evince an equal ſenſe of honour, and deteſtation of perfidy, in the whole body of the Athenians. Theſe people were inflamed with the ambition of governing Greece; and Themiſtocles, a favourite general, exerted all his talents to accompliſh the deſign. One day he aſſembled the citizens of Athens, and informed them, he had a moſt important plan to propoſe; but that he could not communicate it to them, becauſe the ſucceſs of it depended upon

* See Voltaire's Siecle de Louis XIV.

ſecrecy.

ſecrecy. He therefore requeſted them to appoint a confidential perſon, to whom he might explain his views, and whoſe approbation of them might have the force of public authority. Ariſtides was unanimouſly choſen; and Themiſtocles laid open to him the project, which he had conceived, of burning the whole fleet of the Grecian ſtates, then lying unguarded in a neighbouring port; the deſtruction of which, he ſaid, could not fail to ſecure the dominion of Athens. Ariſtides returned to the aſſembly, and declared, that the project of Themiſtocles promiſed the greateſt benefit to the commonwealth; but that it was perfidious and unjuſt. The people inſtantly, and with one voice, rejected the propoſal. But the Athenians were ſoon afterwards corrupted by proſperity: And Thucydides informs us, it became, with them, a maxim of ſtate, "that "nothing is diſhonourable, which is "advantageous."*

* Thucydid. Lib. VI.

Here

Here I could not forbear to mention a noble, and long-continued exertion of public faith and commercial honour, though it was a ſlight digreſſion from the topic of diſcourſe. The Spaniſh galeons, deſtined to ſupply Tierra Firma, and the kingdoms of Peru and Chili, with almoſt every article of neceſſary conſumption, touch firſt at Carthagena, and then at Porto-Bello. In the latter place a fair is opened; the wealth of America is exchanged for the manufactures of Europe; and, during its preſcribed term of forty days, the richeſt traffic on the face of the earth is begun and finiſhed, with unbounded confidence, and the utmoſt ſimplicity of tranſaction. No bale of goods is ever opened, no cheſt of treaſure is examined. Both are received on the credit of the perſons to whom they belong; and only one inſtance of fraud is recorded, during the long period in which trade was carried on with this liberal confidence. All the coined

coined ſilver which was brought from Peru to Porto-Bello in the year 1654, was found to be adulterated, and to be mingled with a fifth part of baſe metal. The Spaniſh merchants, with their uſual integrity, ſuſtained the whole loſs, and indemnified the foreigners by whom they were employed. The fraud was detected; and the treaſurer of the revenue in Peru, the author of it, was publicly burnt.*

Are we not every day guilty of lying, purſued Philocles, in the common forms of civility; and in various modes of ſpeech, which cuſtom has introduced?

Surely not, replied Sophron; for if theſe be well underſtood, no one is deceived by them.

I do not entirely accord with you, Sophron, ſaid I; and I believe it will not be eaſy to juſtify, upon the principles

* Robertſon's Hiſt. of America, Vol. II. Note 93. B. 8.

either

either of wiſdom or ſtrict morality, many complimental expreſſions uſed in converſation. You remember the letter of the ambaſſador from Bantam, which is inſerted in one of the volumes of the Spectator. This honeſt ſtranger informs his maſter, that the people of England call him and his ſubjects barbarians, becauſe they ſpeak the truth; and account themſelves polite and civilized, becauſe they ſay one thing, and mean another. "On "my firſt landing," ſays he, "one told "me that he ſhould be glad to do me "any ſervice in his power. I deſired "him therefore to carry my portman-"teau; but inſtead of ſerving me ac-"cording to his promiſe, he laughed, "and ordered another to do it. I lodg-"ed the firſt week at the houſe of a per-"ſon, who intreated me to think myſelf "at home, and to conſider his houſe as "my own. Accordingly, the next morn-"ing I began to knock down one of the "walls, in order to let in the freſh air;

"and

"and packed up ſome of the houſhold "goods, of which I intended to make "thee a preſent. But the falſe varlet "ſoon ſent me word, that he would have "no ſuch doings in his houſe." Perhaps, however, I may incur the charge of falſhood, by quoting the letter of an ambaſſador, who never exiſted.

Such fictions, Philocles remarked, partake not of the nature of lies. They are intended to convey amuſement or inſtruction, not to ſerve the purpoſes of deceit.

Nor is the caſe eſſentially different, with reſpect to the common forms of civility. Their import is known to all who uſe them; and, as they are expreſſive of urbanity and benevolence, they tend, under proper reſtrictions, to ſoften the aſperities, and heighten the pleaſures of ſocial intercourſe. Genuine courteſy has, indeed, its ſeat in the heart; and implies

implies the deſire of gratifying others, in the ſubordinate offices of life, by the ſacrifice of our own eaſe or intereſt. It is eſſential, therefore, to every amiable character; and can only diſplay itſelf in ſuch appropriated modes as cuſtom has eſtabliſhed in different countries, or amongſt different ranks of men. But, when the *ſubſtance* is wanting, ſome benefit is derived to the world even from its *forms:* And to the ruſtic, who claims the privilege of ſpeaking improper truths, or of acting with rude and malicious ſincerity, we may juſtly addreſs the words of Shakeſpear:

---------- "This is ſome fellow,
"Who, having been praiſed for bluntneſs, doth affect
"A ſaucy roughneſs, and conſtrains the garb
"Quite from his nature. He can't flatter, he,
"An honeſt mind and plain; he muſt ſpeak truth,
"An they will take it ſo; if not, 'tis plain."

On this account, I cannot but condemn the affected ſeverity of Paulinus, biſhop of

of Nola, who reproves his correſpondent Sulpicius Severus, for having ſubſcribed himſelf his ſervant. "Beware," ſays this primitive writer, "thou ſubſcribe "not thyſelf HIS SERVANT, who is thy "BROTHER; for flattery is ſinful; and "it is not a teſtimony of humility, to "give thoſe honours to men, which are "only due to the One Lord, Maſter, "and God."* We find the patriarch Abraham actuated by no ſuch ſcruples, though he lived in the period of paſtoral ſimplicity, and was highly diſtinguiſhed for his virtue and integrity. "*And he* "*lift up his eyes, and looked; and lo, three* "*men ſtood by him: And when he ſaw them,* "*he ran to meet them from the tent door,* "*and bowed himſelf toward the ground;* "*and ſaid, My lord, if now I have found* "*favour in thy ſight, paſs not away, I pray* "*thee, from thy ſervant.*"†

* See Barclay's Apology, p. 525.

† Geneſis, Chap. xviii. Ver. 2, 3.

Lot,

Lot, alſo, is repreſented, in the book of Geneſis, as accoſting, in ſimilar terms, two ſtrangers, with whoſe dignity he was then unacquainted. "*And he ſaid,* "*Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray* "*you, into your ſervant's houſe, and tarry* "*all night, and waſh your feet; and ye* "*ſhall riſe up early, and go on your ways.*"*

The conduct and expreſſions of theſe venerable patriarchs, might, I obſerved, be perfectly conſiſtent with the niceſt adherence to truth and ſincerity. For though they ſtiled themſelves the *ſervants* of the ſtrangers, whom they addreſſed, they could not mean to extend the term beyond ſuch *ſervices,* as the laws of hoſpitality required.

Similar laws, anſwered Philocles, which general conſent has eſtabliſhed, bind every man, in the common intercourſe of life, to reſtrain his angry

* Geneſis, Chap. xix. Ver. 2.

paſſions,

paſſions, to ſilence his ſevere judgments, to ſuppreſs his pride and arrogance, and not only to correct whatever is offenſive in his manners, but to ſhew that urbanity of ſpirit, which, by its benevolent attentions, contributes to alleviate miſery, and to increaſe the ſum of public happineſs and order. Miſtake me not, however, by ſuppoſing that I would recommend forward profeſſions, a fawning demeanour, or unlimited complaiſance. Integrity of heart, and ſteadineſs of principle, forbid all ſinful conformity with the world: And I would neither flatter folly, countenance vice, nor yield up one important duty to artificial politeneſs. But the ſacrifice of my own pride, reſentment, caprice, or ill nature, to ſocial eaſe and enjoyment, may often be required: And he, who, like Diogenes, neither poſſeſſes the ſubſtance, nor the form of courteſy, ſhould be baniſhed from the world. This Cynic, you remember, when he paid a viſit to Plato,

who united a taſte for elegance with the love of philoſophy, exulted in the rudeneſs of reproof, and bedaubing with his dirty feet the fine carpet, which covered the floor, cried out, "Thus I trample on the pride of Plato." "But with far greater pride," retorted Plato, with a ſarcaſtic ſeverity, which the occaſion fully juſtified. Lord Bacon mentions two noblemen of his acquaintance, one of whom kept a very magnificent table, but treated his gueſts with illiberal freedom: The other, when he entertained the ſame gueſts, probably with humbler cheer, but more politeneſs, uſed to aſk them, "Tell truly, was there never a flout, or dry blow given at my lord's table?" To which the gueſts anſwered, "Such and ſuch a thing paſſed." "I thought," ſaid this nobleman, "he would mar a good dinner."*

Urbanity has been admirably characteriſed, by a celebrated writer, under

* Bacon's Eſſays, XXXII.

the

the appellation of GENTLENESS. "This virtue," he obſerves, "is founded on a "ſenſe of what we owe to Him who "made us, and to the common nature "of which we all ſhare. It ariſes from "reflection on our own failures and "wants; and from juſt views of the "condition and the duty of man. It is "native feeling, heightened, and im-"proved by principle. It is the heart, "which eaſily relents; which feels for "every thing that is human; and is "backward and ſlow to inflict the leaſt "wound. It is affable in its addreſs, "and mild in its demeanour; ever ready "to oblige, and willing to be obliged "by others; breathing habitual kindneſs "towards friends, courteſy to ſtrangers, "long ſuffering to enemies. It exer-"ciſes authority with moderation; ad-"miniſters reproof with tenderneſs; con-"fers favours with eaſe and modeſty. It "is unaſſuming in opinion, and tem-"perate in zeal. It contends not eagerly

" about trifles; ſlow to contradict, and
" ſtill ſlower to blame; but prompt to
" allay diſſention, and to reſtore peace.
" It neither intermeddles unneceſſarily
" with the affairs, nor pries inquiſitively
" into the ſecrets, of others. It delights
" above all things to alleviate diſtreſs,
" and, if it cannot dry up the falling
" tear, to ſooth at leaſt the grieving
" heart. Where it has not the power of
" being uſeful, it is never burdenſome.
" It ſeeks to pleaſe, rather than to ſhine
" and dazzle; and conceals with care
" that ſuperiority, either of talents or
" of rank, which is oppreſſive to thoſe
" who are beneath it. In a word, it is
" that ſpirit, and that tenour of manners,
" which the Goſpel of Chriſt enjoins,
" when it commands us *to bear one ano-*
" *ther's burdens*; *to rejoice with thoſe who*
" *rejoice, and to weep with thoſe who weep*;
" *to pleaſe every one his neighbour for his*
" *good*; *to be kind and tender-hearted*; *to*

" *be*

*"be pitiful and courteous; to ſupport the "weak, and to be patient towards all men."**

Sophron appeared to be much impreſſed with this animated and ſtriking picture of courteſy; but he ſuggeſted to Philocles, that amongſt the inferior offices of ſocial life, he had not noticed the duties of COUNSEL and REPROOF. Theſe, ſaid he, I fear, cannot be adminiſtered by a mind under the influence of gentleneſs, without the concealment, and ſometimes, even the violation of truth.

The former part of your allegation, replied Philocles, may perhaps be granted; but the latter I cannot admit. Advice and reprehenſion require, indeed, the utmoſt delicacy; and painful truths ſhould be delivered in the ſofteſt terms, and expreſſed no farther, than is neceſſary to produce their due effect. A courteous man will alſo mix what is conciliating,

* Blair's Sermons, Vol. I. p. 150.

with what is offenſive; praiſe, with cenſure; deference and reſpect, with the authority of admonition, ſo far as theſe can be done in conſiſtence with probity and honour. For the mind revolts againſt all cenſorian power, which diſplays pride or pleaſure in finding fault; and is wounded by the bare ſuſpicion of ſuch diſgraceful tyranny. But advice, diveſted of the harſhneſs, and yet retaining the honeſt warmth, of truth, "is like honey, put round the brim of a veſſel full of wormwood."* Even this vehicle, however, is ſometimes inſufficient to conceal the draught of bitterneſs; of which we are furniſhed with an admirable and diverting inſtance, in the hiſtory of Gil Blas. This young man became the favourite of the archbiſhop of Grenada; in whoſe family he enjoyed a lucrative and agreeable office; and future proſpects of much higher preferment. The archbiſhop regarded him as a perſon of taſte

* Memoirs of Brandenburgh, by the King of Pruſſia.

and

and ſentiment; and one day entered into the following converſation with him. "Liſten, with attention, to what I am "going to deliver. My chief pleaſure "conſiſts in preaching; the Lord gives "a bleſſing to my homilies; they touch "the hearts of ſinners; make them ſe-"rioufly reflect on their conduct, and "have recourſe to inſtant repentance. "This ſucceſs ſhould alone be a ſuffi-"cient incitement to my ſtudies: never-"theleſs, I will confeſs to thee my weak-"neſs, and acknowledge, that I propoſe "to myſelf another reward; a reward, "with which the delicacy of my nature "reproaches me in vain. The honour "of being reckoned a perfect orator, has "charmed my imagination: My per-"formances are thought equally nervous "and refined; but I am anxious to avoid "the misfortune of thoſe who write too "long; and I wiſh to retire without "forfeiting one tittle of my reputation. "Wherefore, my dear Gil Blas, what

"I exact of thy zeal, is, that whenever "thou ſhalt perceive a failure in my "genius, or the leaſt mark of the imbe-"cility of old age in my compoſitions, "that thou wilt immediately advertiſe "me of it. I dare not truſt to my own "judgment, which may be ſeduced by "ſelf-love; but make choice of thine, "becauſe I know it to be good, and "am reſolved to ſtand by thy deciſion."

Some time after this diſcourſe, the prelate was ſeized with a fit of apoplexy. He was, however, ſoon relieved; and ſuch ſalutary medicines were adminiſtered, that his health ſeemed to be re-eſtabliſhed. But his underſtanding ſuffered a ſevere ſhock, which was plainly perceptible in the firſt homily that he compoſed. The ſucceeding one proved perfectly deciſive; as it abounded in repetitions, vain arguments, and falſe pathos. "Now," ſaid Gil Blas to himſelf, "maſter homily-"critic, prepare to exerciſe the office, "which

"which you have undertaken. You ſee "that the faculties of his grace begin "to fail. It is your duty to give him "notice of it, not only as the depoſitory "of his thoughts, but likewiſe, leſt you "ſhould be anticipated by ſome other "of his friends." But the embarraſſment was, how to convey the mortifying intimation to his patron. Fortunately, the archbiſhop extricated him from the difficulty, by inquiring, what people ſaid of him, and if they were ſatisfied with his laſt diſcourſe. Gil Blas anſwered, that the homily had not ſucceeded ſo well as the others, in affecting the audience. "How," replied the prelate, with aſtoniſhment, "has it met with any Ariſtarchus?" "No, ſir," ſaid Gil Blas, "by no means: "But ſince you have laid your injunctions "upon me to be open and ſincere, I "will take the liberty of telling you, "that your late diſcourſe, in my judg-"ment, has not altogether the energy of "your prior performances." The archbiſhop

biſhop grew pale at theſe words; and ſaid, with a forced ſmile, "So then, "Mr. Gil Blas, this piece is not to your "taſte? You think my underſtanding "enfeebled, don't you?" "I ſhould not have ſpoken ſo freely," anſwered Gil Blas, "if your grace had not com- "manded me. I do no more, therefore, "than obey you; and I moſt humbly "beg that you will not be offended at "my freedom." "God forbid," cried the prelate, with precipitation; "God "forbid, that I ſhould find fault with it. "This would be extremely unjuſt. I am "not angry, that you ſpeak your ſenti- "ments: it is the ſentiment only that "I condemn. Know, that I never com- "poſed a better homily, than that, which "you diſapprove; for my genius, thank "Heaven, hath yet loſt nothing of its "vigour. Henceforth, however, I will "chuſe an abler confidant than you are. "Go," added he, puſhing Gil Blas out of his cloſet, by the ſhoulders; "go, "tell my treaſurer to give you a hundred "ducats.

"ducats. I wiſh you all manner of "proſperity, with a little more taſte."*

But we have enlarged ſufficiently on this part of our ſubject. Permit me, therefore, Sophron, to proceed, by inquiring, whether SECRECY, in certain caſes, be not a branch of faithfulneſs, or veracity?

It is a very important one, anſwered Sophron. To betray the confidence that is repoſed in us, whether we have tacitly, or by a promiſe, bound ourſelves to fidelity, evinces a weak underſtanding, or a bad heart. Levity, an eagerneſs to communicate, or the deſire of ſeeming to be important, are the moſt frequent cauſes of the breach of ſecrecy; but it is to be feared, that it ſometimes originates from baſeneſs and malevolence.

This offence was deemed infamous by the ancient Perſians. For it was

* Gil Blas, Vol. III.

their

their opinion, ſays Quintus Curtius, that however deficient a man might be in the talents, requiſite to the attainment of excellency, the negative virtues were, at leaſt, in his power; and that he might be ſilent, although he could not be eloquent.

Here Philocles judiciouſly remarked, that the laws of ſecrecy are not, in all caſes, to be regarded as inviolable; for we are under antecedent obligations, of a nature ſtill more forcible and binding. If any atrocious deſign, either againſt an individual or the ſtate, be communicated in confidence to us, it is our duty to diſſuade the party, if poſſible, from the execution of it. But ſhould our endeavours appear to be unavailing, the concealment of what we know, might involve us in the guilt of the offence; and we ſhould be juſtly puniſhable, as acceſſaries to the crime.* At Florence,

* See Appendix, Sect. IX.

and

and in other ſtates of Italy, a man appriſed of a plot againſt the government, is put to death for not revealing it.* In England, *miſpriſion* of *treaſon* is puniſhed, by forfeiture of rents, and of goods, and by impriſonment during life: And *miſpriſion* of *felony*, by impriſonment for a diſcretionary term, and by fine and ranſom, at the pleaſure of the king's judges.†

If ſuch *miſpriſions* be really culpable, how comes it to paſs, I aſked, that informers are almoſt univerſally held in contempt and deteſtation?

Becauſe few villains, ſaid Philocles, will communicate their wicked deſigns to any but thoſe, whom they believe inclined to participate in the commiſſion of them. Hence there is generally a preſumption of previous guilt in the

* Guiccardini's Hiſt.

† Blackſtone's Commentaries.

informer:

informer: And to this guilt, we ſuper-add that of baſeneſs and perfidy; as we are not willing to ſuppoſe that he is influenced to perform this public act, either by motives of private virtue, or of patriotiſm. However, we ſhould be careful not to carry our prepoſſeſſion againſt informers, even of this claſs, too far. They do eſſential ſervice to the community; and may, perhaps, think this ſervice the beſt atonement for their paſt guilt, and the fulleſt proof of their preſent repentance.

There is another branch of faithfulneſs, which it is alſo diſhonourable to violate; and which lays us under an obligation to avoid TATTLING, TALE-BEARING, and CENSORIOUSNESS. In the unguarded hours of ſocial intercourſe, and ſtill more in the commerce of domeſtic life, the wiſeſt and the beſt of men ſpeak their thoughts without reſerve; and caſting off all reſtraint, may ſometimes deviate, both

both in their words and actions, from the rules of ſtrict propriety. To relate ſuch inadvertencies, is meanneſs; to ridicule them, is ill nature; and to exaggerate them, is calumny.*

Sophron now turned our attention to a moſt important branch of moral Truth, by inquiring whether INSINCERITY in RELIGION may not be deemed a highly criminal ſpecies of lying?

Certainly it may, returned Philocles. GOD is a being of ſpotleſs purity, who ſearches the heart, and commands us to worſhip him "*in ſpirit and in truth.*" "*Lying lips,*" whether employed in falſe profeſſions of faith or of piety, "*are an abomination to the Lord.*" And he who

* *Abſentem qui rodit Amicum,*
Qui non defendit, alio culpante, ſolutos
Qui captat riſus hominum, famamque dicacis,
Fingere qui non viſa poteſt, commiſſa tacere
Qui nequit; hic Niger eſt; hunc tu, Romane, caveto.
Hor. Lib. 1. Sat. 4.

can,

can, habitually, practiſe inſincerity and hypocriſy, in thoſe ſerious and important tranſactions with his Creator, Benefactor, and Judge, which have eternity for their object, is not likely to pay any ſteady regard to temporary intereſts, reſulting from the laws of ſociety, or the ordinary obligations of morality. When one of the kings of France ſolicited M. Bougier, who was a proteſtant, to conform to the Roman Catholic religion, promiſing him, in return, a commiſſion or a government, "Sire," replied he, "if I could be perſuaded to betray my "God for a marſhal's ſtaff, I might be "induced to betray my king for a bribe "of much leſs value."

It was a noble reply! cried Sophron, with ingenuous warmth; and the recital of it brings to my memory a ſtory, which the duke of Sully has recorded of Ambroſe Parè, a zealous Huguenot, and ſurgeon to Charles the Ninth of France.

He

He was with the king, during the time of the maſſacre of Paris, when ſo many thouſand innocent and virtuous perſons were inhumanly butchered in cold blood; and was perhaps a witneſs of the monarch's firing with a carabine, upon the wretched Calviniſts, who fled from their murderers by the windows of the palace. The courtiers, as they came into the royal preſence, vied with each other, in boaſting of the barbarities which they had committed; and Charles ſaid to Parè, whoſe religious opinions he well knew, "The time is now come, when "I ſhall have none but catholics in my "dominions." "Sire," anſwered he, without embarraſſment or perturbation, "can you forget your promiſe to me, "that I ſhould never be obliged to go "to maſs!" The duke of Sully ſeems to be of opinion, that the edict, which Charles iſſued the ſucceeding day, to prohibit the continuance of the maſſacre, was partly owing to the intrepidity and influence of Parè.

The conduct of Parè, ſaid Philocles, on ſo trying an occaſion, affords a ſtriking proof of firmneſs and ſincerity, in the profeſſion of religious faith. But examples, of much higher degrees of ſimilar fidelity, are to be found in the earlier annals of the Chriſtian church. Nor are inſtances wanting, even in the heathen world, of a zealous and fearleſs attachment to thoſe rites, which ignorance deemed ſacred, and which individuals or bodies of men bound themſelves, by ſolemn engagements, to perform. When the Gauls were become maſters of Rome, they beſieged the capitol, and cloſely guarded every avenue, to prevent the eſcape of a ſingle Roman citizen. Under theſe circumſtances of danger, Caius Fabius Dorſo, a young man of an illuſtrious family, deſcended from the capitol, bearing certain holy utenſils in his hands; and paſſed through the midſt of the enemy, regardleſs of their menaces, to offer a ſacrifice to the gods

gods on the hill Quirinalis. This ſacrifice, it was the cuſtom of his anceſtors to perform yearly, on a ſtated day; and when he had finiſhed the ſolemnity, the Gauls, though a fierce and barbarous people, ſuffered him to return unmoleſted, admiring his piety, and aſtoniſhed at his intrepidity.* Facts, like theſe, ſhould make us bluſh at indifference, and abhor diſſimulation in religion. But whilſt we allow ſuch impreſſions to produce their full influence on our hearts, let us beware of paſſing judgment upon others, with raſhneſs or unchriſtian ſeverity. Intemperate zeal is apt to beget a malignancy of ſpirit, no leſs incompatible with the love of GOD, than with benevolence to man. The conviction of the mind, in matters of faith, often depends more upon education and authority, than on the exertions of reaſon: And if we ſee men profeſſing to believe,

* Vid. Liv. Hiſt.

what is unintelligible or abſurd, we ſhould be well aſſured that they have not deceived themſelves, before we accuſe them of mocking their Creator, and impoſing on the world.

We may pity ignorance, and lament credulity; but hypocriſy, urged Sophron, merits from us no indulgence: And this ſpecies of falſhood is ſo characteriſtically marked, that it cannot be miſtaken. Who, that obſerves a man ſanctified in his behaviour, and aſſiduous in his public devotions, whilſt he is at the ſame time ſelfiſh, malevolent, bigoted, and oppreſſive, will heſitate to charge him with the groſſeſt and moſt infamous diſſimulation?

If there be ſufficient proof, that this is really his temper of mind, I acknowledge, ſaid Philocles, that you may and ought to brand him with the name of hypocrite. But no man ſhould be charged with

with a crime univerſally odious, on ſlight or equivocal evidence.* There is a ſpecies of devotion, which, having its ſeat chiefly in the imagination and the paſſions, bears no exact proportion to the virtue of the character in which it is found: And charity, together with a humble ſenſe of our own infirmities, will always lead us to put the moſt favourable conſtruction on the conduct of our fellow creatures. We ſhould remember alſo, that enthuſiaſm and ſuperſtition have often appeared, with the external marks of diſſimulation. The famous lord Herbert, of Cherbury, had written an elaborate work againſt Chriſtianity, which he intitled, *De Veritate, prout diſtinguitur à Revelatione.* But knowing that it would meet with much oppoſition, he remained ſome time in anxious ſuſpence about the publication of it. Providence, however, as he informs us, kindly interpoſed,

* See Appendix, Sect. X.

and determined his wavering reſolutions. Hear the marvellous tale, which he relates!

" Being thus doubtful in my chamber, " one fair day in the ſummer, my caſe- " ment being opened towards the ſouth, " the ſun ſhining clear, and no wind " ſtirring, I took my book *De Veritate* " in my hand, and kneeling on my " knees, devoutly ſaid, *O thou eternal* " *God, I am not ſatisfied enough whether I* " *ſhall publiſh this book; if it be for thy* " *glory, I beſeech thee give me ſome ſign from* " *heaven; if not, I ſhall ſuppreſs it.* I had " no ſooner ſpoken theſe words, but a " loud, though yet gentle noiſe, came " from the heavens, which did ſo com- " fort and cheer me, that I took my " petition as granted, and that I had the " ſign I demanded; whereupon alſo I " reſolved to print my book." *

* See the Life of Lord Herbert, written by himſelf.

It

It muſt appear ſtrange, that a man, who had ſpent a conſiderable part of his life in courts and camps, ſhould poſſeſs ſuch a deluded imagination. And this deluſion will be ſtill more ſuſpicious, when you are told, that lord Herbert's chief argument againſt Chriſtianity is, the improbability that Heaven ſhould reveal its laws only to a portion of the earth. For how could he, who doubted of a *partial*, believe an *individual* revelation? Or is it poſſible, that he could have the vanity to think his book of ſuch importance, as to extort a declaration of the Divine will, when the intereſt and happineſs of a fourth part of mankind, were deemed, by him, objects inadequate to the like diſplay of goodneſs?* Do theſe arguments convince you of lord Herbert's hypocriſy? Your concluſion is haſty, and unjuſt. Read his life, and you will be ſatisfied, that

* See Walpole's Cat. of Royal and Noble Authors.

the warmth of his temper might expoſe him to ſelf-deception; but that he was incapable of obtruding on the world, what he knew to be a falſhood.

Sophron modeſtly acknowledged, that the ſigns of religious diſſimulation might be leſs deciſive, than he had ſuppoſed. But allow me, ſaid he, to contraſt your inſtance of lord Herbert, with two facts concerning Oliver Cromwell; to ſhew that the charge of hypocriſy may be juſtly grounded on ſingle actions, without taking into our view the whole tenour of a man's life. Suppoſe a ſtranger, ignorant of the craftineſs and ambition of Cromwell, to have been preſent in the long parliament, when the ordinance for the trial of Charles I. was read and aſſented to; would he have heſitated to think him an hypocrite, after hearing him deliver the following words? "Should any one have volun-
"tarily propoſed to bring the king to
"puniſh-

"punishment, I should have regarded "him as the greatest traitor; but since "Providence and necessity have cast us "upon it, I will pray to God for a bless-"ing on your councils; though I am "not prepared to give you my advice "on this important occasion. Even I "myself, when I was lately offering up "a petition for his majesty's restoration, "felt my tongue cleave to the roof of "my mouth; and considered this super-"natural movement, as the answer which "Heaven, having rejected the king, "had sent to my supplications."*

Let us further suppose, that this stranger attended the high court of justice, and saw Cromwell, when he took the pen in his hand, to sign the warrant for the king's execution, jocularly bedaub the face of his neighbour with the ink; could he forbear to express his disgust at the levity which he then ob-

* Whitlock.

served;

ſerved; and his abhorrence of the groſs diſſimulation, to which he had been before a witneſs?

You have drawn your example, replied Philocles, from that diſtracted period of our hiſtory, when truth appears to have been baniſhed from public life. The deſpotic views of a monarch, who was under the influence of a popiſh queen, a bigoted prelate, and a corrupt ſtateſman, led him to the practice of deceit and falſhood;* and the parties,

* Conſult Clarendon, Vol. I. p. 22. Ruſhworth, Vol. I. from p. 119 to 127. Hume's Hiſt. 4to. Vol. I. p. 103. Ed. 1754. "He had promiſed to the laſt houſe of commons a redreſs of "this religious grievance; but he was too apt, in imitation "of his father, to conſider theſe promiſes as temporary ex-"pedients, which after the diſſolution of the parliament, he "was not any farther to regard." Id. p. 156. See alſo the Life of the Lord Keeper Williams, p. 143. Whitlock, p. 10. The Petition of Rights. Harris's Hiſt. Sidney's State Papers, Vol. II. p. 665, &c. Rapin ſays, "Charles made frequent "uſe of mental reſervations, concealed in ambiguous terms, "and general expreſſions, of which he reſerved the explica-"tion to a proper time and place. For this reaſon, the par-"liament could never confide in his promiſes, wherein there

"was

who united in oppoſing his encroachments on the civil and religious rights of the people, ſoon deviated from their original principles; and availing themſelves of the gloomy enthuſiaſm of the times, concealed their perfidy and ambition, under the maſk of pious zeal, and divine

" was always either ſome ambiguous term, or ſome reſtriction " that rendered them uſeleſs. This may be ſaid to be one of " the principal cauſes of his ruin; becauſe giving thereby " occaſion of diſtruſt, it was not poſſible to find any expedi- " ent for a peace with the parliament. He was thought to " act with ſo little ſincerity in his engagements, that it was " believed there was no dependence on his word. The " parliament could not even reſolve to debate on the king's " propoſitions, ſo convinced were they of his ability to hide " his real intentions, under ambiguous expreſſions." Rapin's Hiſt. Vol. II. p. 570. The following paſſage is taken from the works of an hiſtorian, who is acknowledged to have been very partial to king Charles. " *Malè poſita eſt lex, quæ* " *tumultuariè poſita eſt,* was one of thoſe poſitions of Ariſtotle," ſays he, " which hath never ſince been contradicted; and " was an advantage, that, being well managed, and ſtoutly " inſiſted upon, would, in ſpite of all their machinations, " which were not yet firmly and ſolidly formed, have brought " them to a temper of being treated with. But I have ſome " cauſe to believe, that even this argument, which was un- " anſwerable for the rejecting that bill, was applied for the " confirming it; and an opinion that the violence and force,

" uſed

divine illuminations. That Cromwell was guilty of hypocriſy, may with too much probability be inferred from numerous and undoubted facts. But I know not whether the two, which you have related, would have authoriſed a ſtranger to charge him publicly, with this reproachful offence. Cromwell poſ-

" uſed in procuring it, rendered it abſolutely invalid and void, " made the confirmation of it leſs conſidered, as not being of " ſtrength to make that act good, which was in itſelf null. " And I doubt this logic had an influence upon other acts of " leſs moment." Clarendon's Hiſt. Vol. II. p. 30. Rapin makes the following obſervation on this paſſage. " Let the " reader judge after this, if we may boaſt of king Charles's " ſincerity, ſince even in paſſing acts of parliament, which " are the moſt authentic and ſolemn promiſes a king of " England can make, he gave his aſſent, merely in an " opinion, that they were void in themſelves, and conſe- " quently he was not bound by this engagement." I have inſerted theſe references and quotations, not merely to authenticate my charge againſt king Charles, but to ſhew, from his unhappy fate, how deluſive, dangerous, and infamous, is the following political obſervation of Machiavel. " It has " appeared by experience, that thoſe princes who have made " light of their word, and artfully deceived mankind, have " all along done great things, and have at length got the better " of ſuch as proceeded upon honourable principles."

ſeſſed

ſeſſed a vigorous, active, and enlarged underſtanding; and could aſſume, whenever he pleaſed, that dignity of manners, which befitted his high ſtation. But when he relaxed himſelf from the toils of war, or the cares of government, his amuſements frequently conſiſted in the loweſt buffoonery. Yet in theſe apparently unguarded moments, he was upon the watch to remark the characters, deſigns, and weakneſſes of men; and to penetrate into the inmoſt receſſes of their hearts. Before the trial of Charles, a meeting was held between the chiefs of the republican party and the general officers, to concert the model of the intended new government. After the debates on this moſt intereſting and important ſubject, Ludlow informs us, that Cromwell, by way of frolic, threw a cuſhion at his head; and when Ludlow took up another cuſhion to return the joke, the general ran down ſtairs, and

was

was in danger of breaking his bones in the hurry.* It is evident, therefore, that this extraordinary man might really be ſerious, under the appearance of levity. But this topic has engroſſed too much of our attention: And I will only add, that the more we cultivate moral or religious ſincerity in ourſelves, the leſs diſpoſed we ſhall be to ſuſpect the want of it in others.

There is a character, ſaid Sophron, of genuine dignity and importance, not uſurped like that of Cromwell, the luſtre of which has been tarniſhed by the charge of religious diſſimulation. This charge, you know, is laid in the ſtrongeſt terms againſt the apoſtle Peter, by St. Paul himſelf, who writes thus to the Galatians: "*But when Peter came to Antioch, I with-*
"*ſtood him to the face, becauſe he was to be*
"*blamed. For before that certain came from*

* Hume's Hiſt.

"*James*

" *James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but*
" *when they were come, he withdrew, and*
" *ſeparated himſelf, fearing them which were*
" *of the circumciſion. And the other Jews*
" *diſſembled likewiſe with him; inſomuch*
" *that Barnabas was carried away with*
" *their diſſimulation. But when I ſaw that*
" *they walked not uprightly, according to the*
" *Goſpel, I ſaid unto Peter before them all,*
" *If thou, being a Jew, liveſt after the*
" *manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews,*
" *why compelleſt thou the Gentiles to live*
" *as do the Jews?*"

The conduct of Peter, on this occaſion, is the more extraordinary, as he appears to have had the fulleſt conviction of the abolition of the Jewiſh ceremonies, by the promulgation of the Goſpel of Chriſt:* A conviction, founded on an immediate revelation from heaven; in conſequence of which he baptized the centurion Cornelius and his family.

* Acts, Chap. v. Ver. 7, 8.

" *And*

" *And he ſaid unto them, Ye know how*
" *that it is an unlawful thing for a man*
" *that is a Jew, to keep company with, or*
" *come unto one of another nation; but God*
" *hath ſhewed me, that I ſhould not call any*
" *man common or unclean: For of a truth*
" *I perceive that God is no reſpecter of*
" *perſons: But in every nation, he that*
" *feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is*
" *accepted with him.*"*

The enemies of Chriſtianity, anſwered Philocles, have indecently and unjuſtly triumphed in this diſpute between the apoſtles: And its friends, with a zeal no leſs heated and erroneous, have anxiouſly ſought to diſavow, or to evade it. Two primitive fathers† of the church, have even repreſented it as a ſtratagem or deceit, concerted privately, for the benefit of the Jewiſh converts: But Auſtin rejects this defence with proper

* Acts, Chap. x.

† Chryſoſtom and Jerom.

indigna-

indignation, as diſhonourable to the character of Paul, and inadequate to the juſtification of Peter, whoſe conduct he confeſſes to have been worthy of reprehenſion. The truth, indeed, ſeems to be, that this great apoſtle ſuffered himſelf to be governed, on the unfortunate occaſion now alluded to, as on ſeveral others of his life, by the warmth and impetuoſity of his paſſions. But diſſimulation is not the concomitant of ſuch a temper of mind: And as the hiſtory of Peter ſufficiently evinces, that this vice was foreign to his nature, it could originate only, in the preſent inſtance, from the ſudden impreſſion of fear on one, not yet completely diſciplined in the ſchool of fortitude. Let us learn, therefore, Sophron, from the ſeverity of St. Paul's rebuke, to avoid all mean prevarications, or time-ſerving compliances, inconſiſtent with our religious principles; and "*to walk uprightly, according to the* "*truth of the Goſpel; holding faſt the liberty,* "*with which Chriſt has made us free.*"

May we remember alſo, in the judgments which we form, concerning the faith and practices of others, that our great Maſter and Lawgiver has inveſted them with the ſame freedom, which we ourſelves enjoy; and that if an apoſtle was not authoriſed to impoſe a yoke on others, we can have no claim to preſide over conſcience, however erroneous it may be, or to aſſume any power in ſpiritual matters, but what ariſes from the perſuaſive influence of ſuperior reaſon: And even in the exerciſe of this faculty, our language and treatment ſhould be ſuch, as to manifeſt the benignity and gentleneſs of Chriſtian toleration.

I could not hear the term *toleration* from the mouth of Philocles, without expreſſing ſome objections to it, although it has been adopted by Mr. Locke, and other writers of the firſt diſtinction. For words, I obſerved, have a conſiderable influence

influence on opinions; and the preſent term appears to be injurious to that religious liberty, which it is deſigned to import. It implies a *right* to impoſe articles of faith, and modes of worſhip; that non-conformity is a crime; and that the *ſufferance* of it is a matter of favour or lenity. But the non-conformiſt in every country, whether he be a Chriſtian at Conſtantinople, a Proteſtant at Rome, an Epiſcopalian in Scotland, or a Preſbyterian in England, if his rational principles be conſonant to his practice, will regard this claim of *right* as uſurpation, and will urge, that it has neither been conferred by Jeſus Chriſt, nor delegated by the people. Our Saviour expreſsly declares, "*My kingdom is not of this world:*" And his religion was perſecuted and oppreſſed, during the period of its greateſt purity and perfection, and when the miniſters of it had gifts and powers which are now unknown. The people could not delegate ſuch a right

to any man, or body of men: For the human mind is ſo mutable, that no individual can fix a ſtandard of his own faith, much leſs can he commiſſion another to eſtabliſh one for him and his poſterity. And this power would in no hands be ſo dangerous, as in thoſe of the ſtateſman or prieſt, who has the folly and preſumption to think himſelf qualified to exerciſe it.

Philocles, by his ſilence, ſeemed to acquieſce in what I had advanced: And when I apologiſed, afterwards, for the interruption, which I had more than once occaſioned, to the methodical diſcuſſion of the ſubject in debate, he very politely replied, that the freedom of converſation admits not of a rigid adherence to the preciſe rules of ſyſtem. But were it otherwiſe, ſaid he, the mind is relieved from wearineſs, and animated to more attention, by ſeaſonable digreſſions, if not too long, or too often repeated.

That

That I am not averſe to enter into them myſelf, you may already have obſerved, and will now find, by my recalling to Sophron's memory the diſpute between the apoſtles Paul and Peter; and deducing from it an argument in favour of the truth of Chriſtianity. It is obvious, I think, from this incident, that there was no combination to deceive mankind amongſt the firſt preachers of the Goſpel; and that if, on ordinary occaſions, they were actuated by the common weakneſſes and prejudices of human nature, they neither attempted to conceal, nor to extenuate them. With the ſimplicity of truth, they related facts, as they occurred, whether advantageous or otherwiſe to their characters. And every unprejudiced judge will diſcover, in the records of the Goſpel, ſuch internal marks of fidelity, as no other hiſtory, either of ancient or modern periods, can diſplay. Juſtly, therefore, may we apply to the writings of the Evangeliſts, that maxim

of Cicero, " *Quis neſcit primam eſſe hiſtoriæ* " *legem, ne quid falſi dicere audeat; deinde,* " *ne quid veri, non audeat?*" *

—— A pauſe enſued; and the converſation ſeemed to be concluded. But Sophron taking up Locke's Eſſay on the Human Underſtanding, which happened to lie on the table before him, read the diſtinction which that author makes, between moral and metaphyſical truth. This ſuggeſted freſh matter of diſcuſſion, and gave riſe to a variety of obſervations, on the danger of error, and on the conduct of reaſon in our intellectual purſuits. Philocles particularly enlarged on the pernicious conſequences of ſupporting FALSE OPINIONS, for the ſake of argument, in public or private diſputations; and repreſented this practice as one great ſource of ſcepticiſm and infidelity, amongſt literary men. † The ima-

* Cicero de Oratore, Lib. II.

† See Appendix, Sect. VI.

gination,

gination, ſaid he, is ſtruck with novelty; it appears honourable to ſhake off the fetters of vulgar prejudice; and pride is doubly gratified, by the humiliation of an opponent, and the triumph over authority. Thus the paſſions become engaged, on the ſide which the ſceptic eſpouſes; ſophiſtry is miſtaken for ſound logic; he becomes enamoured of diſcoveries, made by his ſuperior penetration; and the ſingularity of his notions, or principles, which would create doubt and heſitation in a wiſe man, tends only to ſtrengthen his conviction of their certainty. Milton, deſcribing the character of Belial, one of the fallen angels, ſays in emphatic language,

---------- "His tongue
"Dropt manna, and could make the worſe appear
"The better reaſon, to perplex and daſh
"Matureſt counſels." *

* Paradiſe Loſt, Book II. L. 112.

Does not the philoſopher's maxim, ſaid Sophron, "*Nullius jurare in verba magiſtri*," ſeem to recommend a ſtrict ſcrutiny into every ſubject? And what more judicious method can be deviſed, of correcting our prejudices, in favour of any eſtabliſhed opinion, than by ſetting ourſelves, boldly, in oppoſition to it?

Would you free yourſelf, Sophron, from a trifling malady, by incurring a ſevere and dangerous one; then, urged Philocles, you may correct a ſlight prejudice by adopting another that is greater! In our inquiries into truth, we ought to diveſt ourſelves, as much as poſſible, of every prepoſſeſſion. But it is ſurely a reaſonable deference, to the judgment of the public, concerning any doctrine or opinion, that we ſhould firſt examine, with attention, the arguments in its favour, before we admit the objections which may be raiſed againſt it. And by this method the mind will be

be leaſt unfairly biaſſed in her deciſions; and will reſt on them, with a degree of confidence and ſatisfaction, which can never reſult from partial or prejudiced inveſtigation. Young men of lively parts and acute underſtandings, when they enter upon the field of controverſy, are ſometimes ſo proud of their polemic ſkill, as to engage, indiſcriminately, on any ſide of the queſtion in debate. This is a dangerous practice, and cenſured even by Socrates himſelf; whoſe labours were devoted to the diſcuſſion of truth, and the detection of error. "If thou "continueſt to take delight in idle argu- "mentation," ſaid he to Euclides, "thou "mayeſt be qualified to combat with "the ſophiſts, but wilt never know how "to live with men." And lord Bacon, the great luminary of ſcience, appears to have entertained ſimilar ideas: For, ſpeaking of the logic of Ariſtotle, he terms it, "a philoſophy for contention "only; but barren in the production

"of

"of works, for the benefit of life."* Many lamentable proofs have I ſeen, of the tendency of this habit of altercation to create indifference, not only to intellectual, but alſo to moral and religious truth. Cato, the cenſor, propheſied the ruin of the Roman conſtitution, whenever this ſort of learning ſhould become the faſhionable ſtudy of his countrymen. He conceived his diſlike to it on the following occaſion. "In the year of Rome 599, the Athe-
"nians ſent three of their principal phi-
"loſophers, on an embaſſy to the re-
"public. At the head of theſe was
"Carneades, a very celebrated leader
"of the academic ſect. While he was
"waiting for an anſwer from the ſenate,
"he employed himſelf in diſplaying his
"talents in the art of diſputation: And
"the Roman youth flocked round him,
"in great numbers. In one of theſe
"public diſcourſes he attempted to

* Biog. Brit. Vol. I. 2d Edit. p. 449.

"prove,

" prove, that *juſtice, and injuſtice, depend* " *altogether on the inſtitutions of civil ſociety,* " *and have no foundation in nature.* The " next day, agreeably to the manner of " that ſect, and in order to ſet the argu- " ments on each ſide of the queſtion in " full view, he ſupported with equal " eloquence, the reverſe of his former " propoſition. Cato was preſent at both " theſe diſputations; and being appre- " henſive that the moral principles of " the Roman youth might be ſhaken, " if they ſhould become converts to this " mode of philoſophiſing, he was anxious " to prevent its reception; and did not " reſt, till he had prevailed with the " ſenate to diſmiſs the ambaſſadors, with " their final anſwer." *

Perhaps the verſatile opinions and principles of the Jeſuits may be aſcribed to this cauſe; for I have been informed by ſeveral of them, with whom I have

* *Plut. in Vit. Caton.* Melmoth's Cato, p, 190.

con-

converſed, that their academical exerciſes are chiefly directed to make them ſubtle diſputants. How far the ſame obſervation may be applicable to the members of a learned profeſſion, highly reſpected in this country, I will not preſume to determine. But there is too much reaſon to apprehend, that the cuſtom of pleading for any client, without diſcrimination of right or wrong, muſt leſſen the regard due to thoſe important diſtinctions, and deaden the moral ſenſibility of the heart. *

I have been too ſtrongly impreſſed with the love of truth, replied Sophron, to debate with indifference about it; and therefore to guard againſt deception, from "what the nurſe, and what the prieſt have taught," I would examine my moſt ſerious opinions, and try whether I cannot, by direct oppoſition, or

* See Appendix, Sect. VII.

by

by the teſt of ridicule, invalidate their authority.

I have already given you my reaſons againſt this practice; anſwered Philocles, and I could enforce them by many examples of the pernicious conſequences of it, which have fallen under my obſervation. But private hiſtory is invidious; and I ſhall therefore confine myſelf to a few caſes of public notoriety. The academy of Dijon, many years ago, propoſed the following whimſical prize queſtion, viz. "Whether the ſciences may "not be deemed more hurtful, than "beneficial to ſociety?" M. Rouſſeau became a candidate for the laurel, and aſſumed the affirmative ſide of the queſtion; probably becauſe it furniſhed him with a better opportunity of diſplaying his genius, and powers of perſuaſion.*

* *Major eſt ille qui judicium abſtulit, quam qui meruit.* Cic.

Neſcio quomodo, dum lego aſſentior, cum poſui librum, aſſenſio omnis illa elabitur. Idem.

His

His diſcourſe was received with the higheſt applauſe; he became the dupe of his own rhetoric; and adopted as a philoſopher, the maxims which he had delivered as an orator. From this period commenced his fame, his paradoxes, and his misfortunes.* He combated the common ſenſe of mankind, with all the zeal of a reformer; and his writings proved like the bubble which glitters, expands, and burſts in the ſunſhine: They were dazzling, empty, and ſoon forgotten. I am inclined to ſuſpect that Machiavel's Prince, the Fable of the Bees, and other productions of this nature, originated from cauſes ſomewhat ſimilar to thoſe which gave riſe to the chimæras of Rouſſeau. And it is ſaid that a celebrated adverſary of Chriſtianity, by yielding up his judgment and imagination to a particular ſet of

* Helvetius.

arguments,

arguments, became ſucceſſively a proteſtant, a papiſt, and an infidel.*

But permit me, Sophron, to ſuggeſt to you a caution of ſtill higher importance, which regards ſuch of your intellectual purſuits as relate to the Deity. Religion may be conſidered both as a ſpeculative ſcience, and as a practical principle. In the former view, it conſtitutes the ſublimeſt object of the underſtanding, and the moſt intereſting topic of rational inveſtigation. In the latter, it is a ſpring of motion, and excites all the devout affections of veneration, gratitude, and love. When you contemplate, as a philoſopher, the character of the Divine Being, you muſt be ſtruck with reverence at the proofs, which offer themſelves, of his boundleſs power, univerſal preſence, and infinite duration: And theſe attributes, reflect-

* See an account of Mr. Tindal, in the Britiſh Biography, Vol. IX. p. 314.

ing

ing dignity and luſtre on the more amiable perfections of his nature, will heighten the impreſſion made by the relation, which he ſtands in to you, as your Creator, Benefactor, and Friend. Thus the principle of piety will ſubſiſt in your mind, in its full force; ſupported by the authority of reaſon, and harmoniſing with all the feelings of your heart. But if you deſcend, from theſe general and exalted views of the Divine Being, into minute diſquiſitions concerning his eſſence, the freedom of his agency, and other ſubtleties beyond the human ken, you will ſoon damp the ardour of devotion in your breaſt: And ſhould you make theſe inquiries the common matter of academical diſputation, or of familiar debate, the ſacred flame will be extinguiſhed altogether.* The poet, lately quoted, has deſcribed ſome of the fallen angels, who had been driven from

* See Dr. Gregory's Comparative View; and Mrs. Barbauld on Devotional Taſte.

heaven

heaven for impiety and rebellion, as "ſitting on a hill retired, and reaſoning high"

"Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
"Fix'd fate, free will, foreknowledge abſolute;
"And found no end, in wand'ring mazes loſt." *

I mean not, however, to condemn, indiſcriminately, all metaphyſical reſearches of this kind. It is natural for men of a ſpeculative turn, to extend their views of theology beyond the clear limits either of reaſon, or of revelation: And if their inquiries be conducted with that humility and reverence, which ſuch ſubjects ſhould inſpire, they may tend to invigorate the underſtanding, without depraving the heart. The example of Locke, Newton, Clarke, Hartley, and other diſtinguiſhed philoſophers, affords ſufficient confirmation of this truth; and at the ſame time evinces a ſtill more pleaſing and important one, that Religion numbers, amongſt her votaries, men who have dignified and adorned

* Milton's Paradiſe Loſt, B. II. p 550.

human nature, by their genius, virtue, and learning. I would particularly recommend to your notice, Sophron, I need not ſay to your imitation, the conduct of Mr. Boyle; who had ſo profound a veneration for the Deity, that the name of GOD was never mentioned by him, without a pauſe in his diſcourſe.* This great philoſopher, alſo, had ſuch delicate notions of veracity, and was ſo ſenſible of the imperfection of human knowledge, even when derived from experiment, that in the Preface to his Eſſays, he makes an apology for the frequent uſe of the words *perhaps*, *it ſeems*, *'tis not improbable*, as implying a diffidence of the juſtneſs of his opinions: And this diffidence aroſe, as he informs us, from repeated obſervation, that what pleaſed him for a while, was afterwards diſgraced by ſome further, or more recent diſcovery.

Here Philocles was interrupted by the arrival of a ſtranger; whoſe preſence put an end to the converſation.

* Britiſh Biography, Vol. V. p. 248.

ON THE

INFLUENCE

OF

HABIT AND ASSOCIATION.

---------- VIRESQUE ACQUIRIT EUNDO.

VIRGIL.

---------- ANGIT,

IRRITAT, MULCET, FALSIS TERRORIBUS

IMPLET.

HOR. Ep. I. Lib. II.

MISCELLANEOUS

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE INFLUENCE OF

HABIT AND ASSOCIATION.

SECTION I.

THE laws of HABIT and ASSOCIATION form a moſt important branch both of phyſiology, and of ethics. And, as *the proper ſtudy of mankind is man*, every fact muſt be deemed intereſting, which tends to elucidate either the animal, intellectual, or moral œconomy of his nature. The following obſervations have a reference to one or other of theſe objects. But no particular regard has been paid to ſyſtem in the

arrangement of them: And I have attempted only, as lord Verulam expreſſes it, "to write certain brief notes, "ſet down rather ſignificantly, than "curiouſly."

I. MUSCULAR ACTIONS, perfectly ſpontaneous, may be excited without apparent volition, ſo as to become completely automatic, by the recurrence of thoſe impreſſions, with which they have been long aſſociated. I ſhall give a ſtriking example of the truth of this propoſition.

Several years ago, the counteſs of —— fell into an apoplexy, about ſeven o'clock in the morning. Amongſt other ſtimulating applications, I directed a feather, dipped in hartſhorn, to be frequently introduced into her noſtrils. Her ladyſhip, when in health, was much addicted to the taking of ſnuff; and the preſent irritation of the olfactory nerves produced

duced a junction of the fore-finger and thumb, of the right hand; the elevation of them to the noſe; and the action of ſnuffing in the noſtrils. When the ſnuffing ceaſed, the hand and arm dropped down in a torpid ſtate. A freſh application of the ſtimulus renewed theſe ſucceſſive efforts; and I was a witneſs to their repetition, till the hartſhorn loſt its power of irritation, probably by deſtroying the ſenſibility of the olfactory nerves. The counteſs recovered from the fit, about ſix o'clock in the evening; but, though it was neither long nor ſevere, her memory never afterwards furniſhed the leaſt trace of *conſciouſneſs* during its continuance.

Does not this inſtance of a complex ſeries of actions, ordinarily ſpontaneous, in circumſtances which ſeem to preclude both volition and conſciouſneſs, reflect ſome light on the obſcure queſtion, concerning the ſleep of the ſoul, ſo much

agitated in the time of Mr. Locke? Is not the opinion of this celebrated philoſopher confirmed by it, that the perception or contemplation of ideas is to the mind, what motion is to the body, not its eſſence, but one of its operations: And that an unceaſing energy of the underſtanding and the will, is the ſole prerogative of that infinitely perfect Being, who, according to the language of the Pſalmiſt, *never ſlumbers or ſleeps?*

II. Slight PARALYTIC AFFECTIONS of the organs of ſpeech, ſometimes occur, without any correſpondent diſorder in other parts of the body. In ſuch caſes, the tongue appears to the patient too large for his mouth, the ſaliva flows more copiouſly than uſual, and the vibratory power of the *glottis* is ſomewhat impaired. Hence, the effort to ſpeak ſucceeds the volition of the mind, ſlowly and imperfectly; and the words are uttered with faultering and heſitation.

Theſe

Theſe are facts of common notoriety: But I have never ſeen it remarked, that in this local palſy, the pronunciation of PROPER NAMES is attended with peculiar difficulty; and that the recollection of them becomes either very obſcure, or entirely obliterated; whilſt that of perſons, places, things, and even of abſtract ideas, remains unchanged. Such a partial defect of memory, of which experience has furniſhed me with ſeveral examples, confirms the theory of aſſociation, and at the ſame time admits of an eaſy ſolution by it. For, as words are arbitrary marks, and owe their connection with what they import to eſtabliſhed uſage; the ſtrength of this connection will be exactly proportioned to the frequency of their recurrence; and this recurrence muſt be much more frequent with generic, than with ſpecific terms. Now, proper names are of the latter claſs; and the idea of a perſon or place may remain vivid in the mind, without the leaſt ſignature

ſignature of the appellative, which diſtinguiſhes each of them. It is certain, alſo, that we often think in words; and there is, probably, at ſuch times, ſome ſlight impulſe on the organs of ſpeech, analogous to what is perceived, when a muſical note or tune is called to mind. But a leſion of the power of utterance may break a link in the chain of aſſociation, and thus add to the partial defect of memory, now under conſideration.

III. Dr. Willis relates the ſtory of an IDEOT, who, reſiding within the ſound of a clock, regularly amuſed himſelf with counting aloud the hour of the day, whenever the hammer of that inſtrument ſtruck: But being afterwards removed to a ſituation, where there was no clock, he ſtill retained the former impreſſions ſo ſtrongly, that he continued to diſtinguiſh the ordinary diviſions of time, repeating at the end of every hour, the preciſe number of ſtrokes, which the clock

clock would have ſtruck at that period.* Mr. Addiſon has quoted this fact, in one of the Spectators, not from the original, but from Dr. Plott's Hiſtory of Staffordſhire; and has deduced from it many important moral reflections. Whatever may be thought of the authenticity of this narrative, an inſtance has lately occurred, within the circle of my own obſervation, ſomewhat ſimilar, and which no leſs clearly evinces the power of habit to renew former mechanical impreſſions, independently of any external cauſe.

Mr. W—— had been long confined to his chamber, by a palſy, and other ailments. Every evening, about ſix o'clock, he played at cards with ſome of the family. He was ſeized, in June 1780, at three o'clock in the afternoon, with a fit, which terminated in deſipiency. At the ſtated hour of card

* Willis *De Anima Brutor.* Pars I. Cap. xvi. pag. 85.

playing,

playing, he fancied himſelf to be engaged in his uſual game; talked of the cards, as if they were in his hand; and was very angry at his daughter, when ſhe endeavoured to rectify his miſtaken imagination. His fatuity was of ſhort continuance; but when recovered from it, he expreſſed no recollection of what had paſſed.

IV. A celebrated French writer has remarked, that "the greater degree of "ſagacity any one is maſter of, the more "ORIGINALS will he diſcover in the "characters of mankind." * This *originality* may doubtleſs depend on the primary conſtitution of the mind; but I am perſuaded alſo, that it is often the reſult of particular aſſociations. When theſe are unnatural or inordinate, they produce partial alienations of the underſtanding: And to this ſource we may trace the viſions of enthuſiaſm, the perſe-

* Paſchal.

cuting

cuting zeal of bigotry, the ſanguinary honour of duelling, the ſordid purſuits of avarice, and the toilſome ſolicitudes of ill-directed ambition. Theſe and numberleſs other quixotiſms of the mind give the phantoms of imagination an aſcendancy over reaſon, and produce a temporary inſanity, varying according to its object, degree, and duration. If the predominant train of ideas be foreign to the offices of life, there will be little chance of breaking the magic combination; and the habitual indulgence of this tyranny of paſſion, or fancy, will, at laſt, render it fixed and uncontrolable.

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,
Are of imagination all compact.
One ſees more devils than vaſt hell can hold,
That is the madman: The lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty on a brow of Egypt:
The poet's eye, in a fine phrenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;

And

And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to ſhapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

SHAKESPEAR.

But, as Horatio ſays to Hamlet, "perhaps it may be reaſoning too curiouſly, to reaſon thus." At leaſt, we ſhould reſtrict our concluſions, that they may not involve ſo large a portion of mankind, as to injure the honour even of human nature itſelf. Beſides, paſſion is the ſpring of the mind, which gives vigour and energy to all its movements: And, if not extravagantly diſproportionate to the value of its object, it may be indulged, not only with innocence, but ſometimes even with ſingular advantage. For, the ardour inſpired by it is the ſource of all that is excellent in genius, and ſublime in conduct: And without the ſalutary aid of this ſpecies of enthuſiaſm, we ſhould ſink into a ſtate of torpid apathy.

But

But, though it be difficult to define the preciſe boundaries of rationality, it can neither be denied, nor concealed, that partial inſanity may ſubſiſt with general intelligence; of which the affecting caſe of Mr. Simon Browne affords a curious example. He was a diſſenting clergyman, of exemplary life, and eminent intellectual abilities; but having been ſeized with melancholy, he deſiſted from the duties of his function, and could not be perſuaded to join in any act, either of public or of private worſhip. The reaſon which, after much importunity, he aſſigned, for this change in his conduct, was, "that he had fallen "under the diſpleaſure of GOD, who "had cauſed his rational ſoul gradually "to periſh, and left him only an ani-"mal life, in common with brutes: "that it was therefore profane in him "to pray, and improper to be preſent "at the prayers of others." In this opinion

opinion he remained inflexible, at the time when all the powers of his mind ſeemed to ſubſiſt in full vigour; when his judgment was clear, and his reaſoning ſtrong and concluſive. For at this period he publiſhed a defence of the *Religion* of *Nature*, and of the *Chriſtian Revelation*, in anſwer to *Tindal's Chriſtianity as old as the Creation*: and the work is univerſally allowed to be the beſt, which that celebrated controverſy produced. But in a dedication of it to queen Caroline, which ſome of his friends found means to ſuppreſs, he diſplays the very extraordinary phrenzy, under which he laboured. Speaking of himſelf, he informs her majeſty, "that "by the immediate hand of an aveng- "ing GOD, his very thinking ſubſtance "has, for more than ſeven years, been "continually waſting away, till it is "wholly periſhed out of him, if it be "not utterly come to nothing."

This

This remarkable, and humiliating example of vigour and imbecility, rectitude and perverſion of the ſame underſtanding, I have related on the authority of Dr. Hawkeſworth,* who has preſerved the entire copy of the dedication, from which only a brief extract is here made. Our ignorance of the hiſtory of Mr. Browne renders it impoſſible to trace, to its ſource, this mental malady. But there is reaſon to preſume, that it originated from ſome ſtrong impreſſion, and ſubſequent invincible aſſociation, connected with, or perhaps producing a change in the organization of the brain. Perhaps, after having acquired an early predilection for the writings of Plato, he might afterwards, in ſome ſeaſon of hypochondriacal dejection, fall into the gloomy myſticiſm of the later followers of that amiable philoſopher: For Plotinus, who flouriſhed in the third century

* See the Adventurer.

after the Chriſtian æra, taught that the moſt perfect worſhip of the Deity conſiſts, not in acts of veneration, or of gratitude, but in a certain ſelf-annihilation, or total extinction of the intellectual faculties.*

I am inclined to believe, that the celebrated M. Paſchal laboured under a ſpecies of inſanity, towards the concluſion of his life, ſimilar to that of Mr. Simon Browne. And, having hazarded ſuch a ſurmiſe, it is incumbent on me to ſhew, on what it is founded. This very extraordinary man diſcovered the moſt aſtoniſhing marks of genius in his childhood; and his progreſs in ſcience was ſo rapid, that at the age of ſixteen, he wrote an excellent treatiſe of Conic Sections. He poſſeſſed ſuch a capacious and retentive memory, that he is ſaid "never to have forgotten any thing which

* See Collier's Hiſt. Dict. Alſo Maclaurin's Account of Sir Iſaac Newton's Diſcoveries, page 397.

he

he had learned." And it was his practice, to digeſt and arrange in his mind, a whole ſeries of reflections, before he committed them to writing. This power was at once ſo accurate and extenſive, that he has been heard to deliver the entire plan of a work, of which he had taken no notes, in a continued narration, that occupied ſeveral hours. But it is related, by the editor of his *Thoughts on Religion and other Subjects*,* "that it pleaſed GOD ſo to touch his "heart, as to let him perfectly under-"ſtand, that the Chriſtian religion "obligeth us to live for GOD only, and "to propoſe to ourſelves no other "object." In conſequence of this perſuaſion, he renounced all the purſuits of knowledge, and practiſed the moſt ſevere and rigorous mortifications; living in the greateſt penury, and refuſing every indulgence, which was not abſolutely

* See the Preface to that work.

neceſſary for the ſupport of life. It appears from ſome of his pious meditations, that this reſolution of mind proceeded from the viſitation of ſickneſs. And the following ſolemn addreſſes to the Deity clearly indicate an imagination perverted by the moſt erroneous aſſociations.

"O LORD, thou gaveſt me health to "be ſpent in ſerving thee, and I applied "it to an uſe altogether profane. Now "thou haſt ſent ſickneſs for my correc- "tion.—I know, O LORD, that at the "inſtant of my death, I ſhall find my- "ſelf entirely ſeparated from the world, "ſtripped naked of all things, ſtanding "alone before thee, to anſwer to thy "juſtice concerning all the motions of "my thoughts, and ſpirits. Grant that "I may look on myſelf as dead already, "ſeparated from the world, ſtripped of "all the objects of my paſſion, and "placed alone in thy preſence.—I praiſe

"thee,

"thee, O GOD, that thou haſt been "pleaſed to anticipate the dreadful day, "by already deſtroying all things to my "taſte and thoughts, under this weak-"neſs, which I ſuffer from thy provi-"dence. I praiſe thee, that thou haſt "given me this divorce from the plea-"ſures of the world." Was it conſonant with ſoundneſs of underſtanding, for a man to take a ſudden diſguſt at all the liberal ſtudies, and innocent enjoyments, which had before engaged and gratified his mind? And was it not as much the fiction of a diſtempered fancy, that GOD enjoined poverty, abſtinence, and ignorance, to one poſſeſſing rank, fortune, and the nobleſt endowments of the mind, as the belief of Simon Browne, that he was diveſted of that rationality, which at the ſame time he ſo eminently diſplayed? Whenever falſe ideas, of a practical kind, are ſo firmly united, as to be conſtantly, and invariably miſtaken for truths, we

very juſtly denominate this unnatural alliance INSANITY. And, if it give riſe to a train of ſubordinate wrong aſſociations, producing incongruity of behaviour, incapacity for the common duties of life, or unconſcious deviations from morality and religion, MADNESS has then its commencement.

In the foregoing examples, the force of habit and aſſociation is clearly manifeſt. And man, whilſt under the influence of their authority, however deſpotic or perverted, ſtill retains a capacity for action and enjoyment, though he ceaſes to be a rational or moral agent. But the ſuſpenſion of their operation ſtops at once all the movements of the mind, and ſeems to annihilate every energy of the underſtanding, the affections, and the will. On the 25th of October 1778, a ſea-faring perſon, about forty years of age, was recommended as a patient to the LUNATIC ASYLUM in York,

York.* During his abode in the hoſpital, he was never obſerved to expreſs any deſire for ſuſtenance, or to ſhew any preference of it to his medicines. The firſt ſix weeks after his admiſſion, he was fed in the manner of an infant. A ſervant undreſſed him at night, and dreſſed him in the morning; after which, he was conducted to his ſeat in the common parlour, where he remained all day, with his body bent, and his eyes fixed upon the ground. Every thing was indifferent to him, and he was regarded by all about him, as an animal converted nearly into a vegetable. In this ſtate of inſenſibility he remained five years and ſix months. But, on the 14th of May 1782, on his entrance into the parlour, he ſaluted the convaleſcents with the words *Good morrow to you all.* He then thanked the ſervants of the houſe, in the moſt affectionate

* This caſe was lately tranſmitted to me, by my friend Dr. Hunter of York, to be communicated to the Literary and Philoſophical Society of Mancheſter. I have given only an abridgment of it.

manner, for their tenderneſs to him, of which he had begun to be ſenſible ſome weeks before, but till then, had not reſolution to expreſs his gratitude. A few days after this unexpected recovery, he was permitted to write a letter to his wife, in which he expreſſed himſelf with becoming propriety. At this time, he ſeemed to take peculiar pleaſure in the enjoyment of the open air, and in his walks converſed with freedom and ſerenity. On making enquiry concerning what he felt, during the ſuſpenſion of his intellectual and ſenſitive powers, he replied, that his mind had been *totally loſt*; but that, about two months before his full reſtoration to himſelf, he began to have thoughts and ſenſations, which, at firſt, ſerved only to excite in him fears and apprehenſions, eſpecially in the night-time. On the 28th of May 1782, he returned to his family; and has now the command of a ſhip employed in the Baltic trade.

SECTION

SECTION II.

I. IT is highly inſtructive, as well as curious, to contemplate the progreſſive influence of particular aſſociations on the affections and the judgment, as they gradually acquire the force of habit by time, and vividneſs by frequent renewal. Dr. Swift, in a letter to lord Bolingbroke, dated 1729, expreſſes himſelf in the following terms. "I remember, when I was a little boy, I felt "a great fiſh at the end of my line, "which I drew up almoſt on the ground, "but it dropt in, and the diſappointment "vexes me to this very day, and, I believe, it was the type of all my future "diſappointments."

This little incident, perhaps, gave the firſt wrong bias to a mind, prediſpoſed to

to ſuch impreſſions; and by operating with ſo much ſtrength and permanency, it might poſſibly lay the foundation of the Dean's ſubſequent peeviſhneſs, paſſion, miſanthropy, and final inſanity. The quickneſs of his ſenſibility furniſhed a ſting to the ſlighteſt diſappointment; and pride feſtered thoſe wounds, which ſelf-government would inſtantly have healed. As children couple hobgoblins with darkneſs, every contradiction of his humour, every obſtacle to his preferment, was, by him, aſſociated with ideas of malignity and evil. By degrees, he acquired a contempt of human nature, and a hatred of mankind, which, at laſt, terminated in the total abolition of his rational faculties.

This is no exaggerated picture, and we have the Dean's own authority for its accuracy. "The chief end," ſays he, in a letter to Mr. Pope, "I propoſe to "myſelf in all my labours, is to vex "the world, rather than divert it; and, "if

" if I could compaſs that deſign, without " hurting my own perſon or fortune, I " would be the moſt indefatigable writer " you have ever ſeen. I have ever hated " all nations, profeſſions, and communi- " ties; and all my love is towards indi- " viduals. For inſtance, I hate the tribe " of lawyers, but I love Counſellor ſuch " a one, and Judge ſuch a one: 'Tis ſo " with phyſicians, (I will not ſpeak of my " own trade) ſoldiers, Engliſh, Scotch, " French, and the reſt. But principally " I hate and deteſt that animal called " man, although I heartily love John, " Peter, Thomas, and ſo forth. This is " the ſyſtem upon which I have governed " myſelf many years, (but do not tell) " and ſo I ſhall go on, till I have done " with them."*

This letter is not written in a ſtrain, which will ſuffer the moſt indulgent

* Pope's Works, Vol. IX. Lett. 2.

critic

critic to aſcribe it to jocularity. And in the epitaph, which the Dean compoſed for himſelf long afterwards, and which is inſcribed on his monument in the cathedral of St. Patrick's, he has left a ſolemn, and deciſive memorial of his miſanthropy.

HIC DEPOSITUM EST CORPUS
JONATHAN SWIFT, S.T.P.
UBI SÆVA INDIGNATIO
ULTERIUS COR LACERARE NEQUIT,
&c.

The ſtrongeſt tint, in the complexion of the human character, may be ſometimes formed by a circumſtance, or event apparently caſual; which, by forcibly impreſſing the mind, produces a laſting aſſociation, that gives an uniform direction to the efforts of the underſtanding, and the feelings of the heart.

Dr. Conyers Middleton, one of the moſt learned, various, and elegant writers

ters of the preſent age, is ſaid to have been much more addicted, in the early part of his life, to muſic, than to ſcience. But he was rouſed from his favourite amuſement, and ſtimulated to the cloſeſt application to ſtudy, by a ſarcaſm of his rival and enemy, the celebrated Dr. Bentley, who ſtigmatized him with the name of fidler. * And indignation made him eager to convince the Doctor and the world, that he could *write* as well as *fiddle*; a conviction, of which his opponent had, afterwards, the moſt painful experience. †

The author of the *Night Thoughts*, a poem which contains the tendereſt touches of nature and paſſion, and the ſublimeſt truths of morality and religion, intermixed with frivolous conceits, turgid obſcurities, and gloomy views of human life, wrote that work under the

* Gent. Mag. 1773, page 387.

† Brit. Biograph. Vol. IX.

recent

recent preſſure of ſorrow, for the loſs of his wife, and of a ſon and daughter-in-law, whom he loved with paternal tenderneſs. Theſe ſeveral events happened within the ſhort period of three months, as appears from the following apoſtrophe to death.

Inſatiate archer! could not *one* ſuffice?
Thy ſhaft flew *thrice*; and *thrice* my peace was ſlain;
And *thrice*, e'er *thrice* yon moon had fill'd her horns.*

But, though time alleviated this diſtreſs, his mind acquired from it a tincture of melancholy, which continued through life; and caſt a ſable hue even on his very amuſements. The like diſpoſition, alſo, diſcovered itſelf in his rural improvements. He had an alcove in his garden, ſo painted as to ſeem, at a diſtance, furniſhed with a bench or ſeat, which invited to repoſe; and when, upon

* Night Thoughts.

a nearer

a nearer approach, the deception was perceived, this motto at the ſame time preſented itſelf to the eye,

Inviſibilia non decipiunt.

The things unſeen do not deceive us.*

The following witty alluſion bears the marks of a ſimilar turn of thought. The Doctor paid a viſit to Archbiſhop Potter's ſon, then Rector of Chiddingſtone, near Tunbridge. This gentleman lived in a country, where the roads were deep and miry; and when Dr. Young, after ſome danger and difficulty, arrived at his houſe, he enquired, "Whoſe field is that which I have croſſed?" "It is mine," anſwered his friend. "True," ſaid the Poet, "*Potter's field, to bury ſtrangers in.*"†

* Brit. Biograph. Vol. IX.

† Vid. Gent. Mag. July 1781, page 319.

II. It

II. It is a very important office of education to guard the underſtanding againſt the union of ideas, which have no natural or proper connection. Yet this object is leſs attended to than any other; and we often find men diſtinguiſhed for genius, erudition, and even ſtrength of mind, warped by the falſe conceptions, and governed by the prejudices of puerility. Credulouſneſs is the concomitant of the firſt ſtages of life; and is indeed the principle on which all inſtruction muſt be founded: But it lays the mind open to impreſſions of error, as well as of truth: And, when ſuffered to combine itſelf with that paſſion for the marvellous, which all children diſcover, it foſters the rankeſt weeds of chimera and ſuperſtition; rooting firmly in the mind, *all that the nurſe, and all the prieſt have taught.* Hence, the awful ſolemnity of *darkneſs viſible*, and of what the Poet has denominated *a dim religious light*; together with the terrors of evil omens,

omens, of haunted places, and of ghaſtly ſpectres. The energy and beauty of the following lines depend on the univerſal prevalence of theſe early acquired ideas.

I am thy father's ſpirit;
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confin'd to faſt in fires;
Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature,
Are burnt and purg'd away. But, that I am forbid
To tell the ſecrets of my priſon houſe,
I could a tale unfold, whoſe lighteſt word
Would harrow up thy ſoul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like ſtars, ſtart from their ſpheres,
Thy knotty and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to ſtand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine:
But this eternal blazon muſt not be
To ears of fleſh and blood.*

Hiſtory preſents us with few characters ſuperior to thoſe of Henry the fourth, of France, and his prime miniſter the duke

* Shakeſpear's Hamlet.

of Sully. But notwithſtanding the wiſdom, knowledge, and diſcernment of theſe great men, they appear, on ſeveral occaſions, to have been actuated, by their juvenile aſſociations, in favour of aſtrology. What can be more foreign to the events of human life; what leſs adapted to excite fear or hope in the mind of an intelligent man, than the aſpect of a diſtant ſtar, or the variegated lines of his hand? Yet Sully confeſſes, that an early prepoſſeſſion had made him weak enough to give credit to predictions, derived from this fanciful origin. And though he informs us that the king, his maſter, was of opinion, religion ought to inſpire a contempt of ſuch prophecies, the converſation which he relates, at the ſame time, evidently betrays Henry's confidence in them. This matter is put beyond diſpute by an incident, which occurred ſoon after the birth of the Dauphin; the particulars of which I

ſhall

ſhall recite, from the memoirs of this excellent writer.

* "La Riviere was the king's firſt phy-
"ſician, a man who had little more
"religion than thoſe generally poſſeſs,
"who blend it with judicial aſtrology.
"Henry already felt a tenderneſs for
"his ſon, which filled him with an
"eager anxiety to know his fate: And
"having heard that La Riviere ſuc-
"ceeded wonderfully in his predictions,
"he commanded him to calculate the
"Dauphin's nativity, with all the cere-

* It ſhould ſeem that aſtrology was conſidered, formerly, as an eſſential part of the learning of a phyſician; for Chaucer, in the prologue to his Canterbury tales, has thus characteriſed him.

With us there was a doctor of phyſik,
In al the worlde was ther non hym lyk,
To ſpeke of phyſik and of ſurgerye;
For he was groundit in aſtronomy.
He kept his pacient a ful gret del
In hourys by his magyk naturel;
Wel couth he fortunen the aſcendent
Of his ymagys for his pacient.

" monials of art. To aid this buſineſs, " he had carefully ſought for the moſt " accurate watch, which could be pro- " cured; that the preciſe moment of " the prince's birth might be exactly " aſcertained. About a fortnight after- " wards, the king and Sully being alone " together, their converſation turned " upon the prediction of the aſtrologer, " La Broſſe, concerning his majeſty. " This renewed Henry's ſolicitude, with " reſpect to his ſon; and he ordered " La Riviere to be called. 'Monſieur " La Riviere,' ſaid the king, 'what " have you diſcovered, relative to the " Dauphin's deſtiny.' 'I had begun my " calculations,' replied Riviere, 'but " I left them unfiniſhed, not caring to " amuſe myſelf any longer with a ſcience, " which I have always believed to be, " in ſome degree, criminal.' The king, " diſſatisfied with this anſwer, com- " manded his phyſician to ſpeak freely, " and without concealment, on pain of

" his

" his diſpleaſure. La Riviere ſuffered
" himſelf to be preſſed ſtill longer; but
" at laſt, with an air of apparent diſ-
" content, he delivered himſelf in the
" following terms. ' Sire, your ſon will
" complete the common period of human
" life, and will reign longer than you
" ſhall do: But his turn of mind will
" be widely different from yours; he
" will be obſtinate in opinion, often
" governed by his own whims, and
" ſometimes by thoſe of others. Under
" his adminiſtration it will be ſafer to
" think, than to ſpeak. Impending
" ruin threatens your former ſociety.
" He will perform great exploits, be
" fortunate in his deſigns, and make a
" diſtinguiſhed figure in Europe. There
" will be a viciſſitude of peace and war
" in his time. He will have children,
" and after his death affairs will grow
" worſe and worſe. This is all you
" can know from me," concluded La
" Riviere, ' and more than I had re-

" ſolved to tell you.' His majeſty, and " the duke of Sully, remained a long " time together, making reflections on " the words of the aſtrologer, which left " a ſtrong impreſſion on the mind of the " king."

III. LUDICROUS ASSOCIATIONS, not founded in truth or nature, are peculiarly unfavourable to the principles and practice of virtue and religion. Reaſon, eſpecially during the period of youth, affords but a feeble barrier againſt the attacks of ridicule; and the mind that is enſlaved by its influence, may be ſo far deluded or depraved, as to loſe the ſuſceptibility of good impreſſions, or to contemplate the moſt amiable moral affections with deriſion, ſhame, and even diſguſt.

---------- Here ſubdued
By frontleſs laughter, and the hardy ſcorn
Of old, unfeeling vice, the abject ſoul
With bluſhes half reſigns the candid praiſe

Of

Of temperance, and honour; half diſowns
A free man's hatred of tyrannic pride;
And hears with ſickly ſmiles the venal mouth,
With fouleſt licence, mock the patriot's name.*

The celebrated Dr. Pitcairn was no leſs diſtinguiſhed for wit than learning. It is recorded, that, as he paſſed one day along the ſtreets, he beheld the affecting ſpectacle of a maſon, killed by the fall, and buried in the ruins, of a chimney, which he had juſt completed. "Bleſſed are the dead, who die in the Lord," ſaid he, "for they reſt from their labours, and their works follow them." Such a humourous conjunction of reſembling yet incongruous ideas, probably ſtifled, in his breaſt, the ſentiments of compaſſion. And I have been informed by a very humane friend, that on the relation of a melancholy event, ſimilar in its circumſtances, the recollection of this ludicrous remark ſubſtituted, in his mind,

* Akenſide's Pleaſures of Imagination, Book III.

emotions of laughter, for thoſe of commiſeration.

The natural propenſity of Dean Swift led him to the indulgence of this ſpecies of drollery, very much to the prejudice of every finer feeling of the heart. In one of his letters, he laments the mortal illneſs of his amiable friend Arbuthnot; but mixes, with his expreſſions of ſorrow, certain whimſical reflections, which convert his mourning into grimace. "There is a paſſage in Bede," ſays he to Mr. Pope, "highly commending the piety "and learning of the Iriſh, in that age; "where, after abundance of praiſes, he "overthrows them all, by lamenting, "that, alas! they kept Eaſter at a wrong "time of the year. So our Doctor has "every quality and virtue, that can make "a man amiable or uſeful; but, *alas!* "he hath *a ſort of ſlouch in his walk.* I "pray God protect him, for he is an "excellent

"excellent Chriſtian, though not a ca-
"tholic."*

When the mind has been long habituated to the aſſemblage of ludicrous ideas, they recur on very improper occaſions, not only ſpontaneouſly, but even in deſpite of every effort of the judgment and the will. In this ſtate, elevation of thought, and dignity of character, are unattainable; and ſerioufneſs, when aſſumed, is always marked with ſome glaring and riſible inconſiſtency. Swift, in his laſt teſtament, bequeaths three old hats, and other ſtill more trifling and abſurd legacies, with farcical ſolemnity; and the celebrated Hogarth could not help diſplaying traits of humour, in his graveſt hiſtorical paintings. I have heard it remarked by one, who was ſometimes the companion of his walks, that he would interrupt the moſt intereſting converſation, to laugh at any oddity,

* Pope's Works, Vol. IX. Lett. 11.

which

which preſented itſelf; and that his eyes were conſtantly caſt about, in ſearch of objects ſingular and diverting. When a man, of this turn, applies himſelf to books, it is not inſtruction or rational criticiſm, but hilarity, that is his purſuit: And he finds food for his prevailing appetite, equally palatable, both in the beauties and the blemiſhes of his author. For Tully has well obſerved, that the *verbum ardens*, the glowing boldneſs of expreſſion, which ſublimity of ſentiment inſpires, may be eaſily rendered ludicrous, by an illiberal paraphraſe. Even entire productions, of ſome of the beſt writers, have been thus miſrepreſented and deformed, for the purpoſe of merriment, under the title of traveſties. And the bulk of mankind are readily deceived into the belief, that what gives riſe to laughter is in itſelf ridiculous. For this reaſon, a reader of ſenſibility, who has the intereſt of virtue and religion at heart, will peruſe, with pain and diſguſt, the

Meditations

*Meditations on a Broom-ſtick, written according to the ſtile and manner of the Honourable Robert Boyle.** "To what a "height," ſays lord Orrery, "muſt the "ſpirit of ſarcaſm ariſe in an author, "who could prevail upon himſelf to "ridicule ſuch a man as Mr. Boyle! "But the ſword of wit, like the ſcythe "of time, cuts down friend and foe, and "attacks every thing that accidentally "lies in its way." It muſt be confeſſed, however, that this great and good philoſopher has indulged, in his theological writings, certain conceits, which will draw a ſmile from his warmeſt admirers. A zeal to promote the habit of pious and moral reflections has, ſometimes, tempted him to force ideas into the moſt unnatural alliance; and to deduce very important analogies, from objects or circumſtances, not only incongruous, but low and contemptible. Thus, from the

* Swift's Works, Vol. V. p. 372.

ſtumbling

ſtumbling of a horſe, in a good road, he infers the danger of proſperity; from being let blood in a fever, he juſtifies the wiſdom of the Deity, in depriving his creatures of ſpiritual ſuperfluities; and from a diſtaſte of the ſyrups, preſcribed by his phyſician, he concludes, that the good things of life are not objects of envy, becauſe not always reliſhed as enjoyments. But I feel a reluctance to point out ſuch trivial exuberances, in the works of Mr. Boyle. It is ungenerous to injure the well earned wreath of laurel, which he wears, by faſtidiouſly culling a few ſolitary leaves, that are withered. We ſhould remember alſo, that dignity and meanneſs, grace and vulgarity, have, in many inſtances, no fixed ſtandard; and are dependent on certain acceſſory aſſociations, which vary in different countries, at different periods of time, and with different perſons even of the ſame age and place. Jacob is repreſented, in the holy Scriptures, as calling

calling his ſons together, before his death, to deliver to each of them his benediction. And in the language of metaphor and prophecy, he ſays, *Iſſachar is a ſtrong aſs, couching down between two burdens:* From which it appears, that this animal was not then regarded as a ſymbol of ſtupidity and inſignificance. Ajax, retreating between two armies, is compared, by Homer, to the lion for undaunted courage, and to the aſs for ſullen and unyielding ſlowneſs.* But Mr. Pope, in his tranſlation, has omitted the latter alluſion, to accommodate his work to the ſtate of modern opinion. The ſame ſublime poet exhibits the awful uncertainty of victory, in the engagement between the Greeks and Trojans, by the image of a poor woman, weighing wool in a pair of ſcales. And Euſtathius ſays, it was a tradition, that Homer derived this ſimile from the occupation of his mother, who main-

* Il. Lib. XI.

tained

tained herſelf by ſuch manual labour.* But a ſtill more remarkable compariſon occurs, in the writings of this ancient bard. For Ulyſſes, toſſing about through the whole night, with reſtleſs anxiety, is likened to a fat pudding, frying on the fire.† Even Virgil, whoſe elegance and correctneſs are univerſally acknowledged, has drawn the ſimilitude of a queen (Amata the wife of king Latinus) under the violence of paſſion, from a company of boys whipping a top.‡

I do not recollect one coarſe alluſion, or low image in the whole poem of *Paradiſe Loſt*; though ſeveral, contained in it, are fantaſtical, being derived from the fictions of heathen mythology. But it is more than probable that Milton, when tranſlated by foreigners, will not appear to deſerve the character of un-

* See the Notes of Dacier, Pope, and other Commentators.

† Od. Lib. XXI. ‡ Æn. Lib. VII.

deviating

deviating dignity. For the correſpondent terms, in other languages, may have ſecondary ideas of meanneſs affixed to them, from which, in the original, they are exempt. The ſame remark is applicable to other works; and it is particularly to be wiſhed, that the books of the Old and New Teſtament, in the common verſion, were always peruſed with a candid attention to it.

I have been told of a picture, which exhibits a burleſque view of the tablature, repreſenting the judgment of Hercules. The young Hero is painted as a tall grenadier, Virtue as a methodiſt preacher, and Pleaſure as a drunken ſtrumpet. The parody, if this term can be applied to painting, may anſwer the purpoſe of exciting laughter, but will counteract, in the ſpectator's mind, all the beneficial effects of the moſt inſtructive and philoſophical apologue of antiquity.

Diſcit

Diſcit enim citius, meminitque libentius illud
Quod quis deridet, quam quod probat et veneratur.
HOR.

PARODY is a favourite flower both of ancient and of modern literature.* It is a ſpecies of ludicrous compoſition, which derives its wit from aſſociation; and never fails to produce admiration and delight, when it unites taſte in ſelection, with felicity of application. Even licentious ſpecimens of it move to laughter; for we are always inclined to be diverted with mimickry, or ridiculous imitation, whether the original be an object of reſpect, of indifference, or of contempt. A poliſhed Athenian audience heard, with burſts of mirthful applauſe, the diſcourſes of the venerable Socrates, burleſqued upon the ſtage; and no Engliſhman can read the Rehearſal without ſmiling at the medley of borrowed abſurdities, which it exhibits.

* See Diog. Laertius, Lucian. Dialog. Boileau, Cervantes, Butler, Swift, &c. &c.

Mr.

Mr. Pope's *Dunciad, and Rape of the Lock* abound with the moſt admirable parodies; but ſome of them may appear, to a religious mind, chargeable with levity and profaneneſs. I ſhall quote an example, both of the excellent and exceptionable; as the beauty of the one, and the fault of the other, equally relate to the ſubject of the preſent eſſay.

When the fatal rape was committed by the Baron, on Belinda's Lock, ſhe is repreſented as attempting to revenge herſelf by her bodkin.

Now meet thy fate, incens'd Belinda cry'd,
And drew a deadly bodkin from her ſide.
The ſame, his ancient perſonage to deck,
Her great great grandſire wore about his neck,
In three ſeal rings; which after, melted down,
Formed a vaſt buckle for his widow's gown:
Her infant grandame's whiſtle next it grew,
The bells ſhe jingled, and the whiſtle blew;
Then in a bodkin graced her mother's hairs,
Which long ſhe wore, and now Belinda wears. *

* Canto V. line 87.

The unlearned reader will be ſtruck with this ſplendid, genealogical deſcription of an inſignificant bodkin: But he, who is verſed in the writings of Homer, will peruſe it with additional delight, from the recollection of the analogy, which it bears to the progreſs of Agamemnon's ſceptre. In the third Canto, of the incomparable poem above referred to, a game of Ombre is deſcribed with all the *pathos* and ſolemnity, which the heroic muſe can call forth: And the cards in Belinda's hand being pompouſly enumerated, viz.

---------- Four kings, in majeſty rever'd,
With hoary whiſkers, and a forky beard:
And four fair queens, whoſe hands ſuſtain a flow'r,
Th' expreſſive emblem of their ſofter power, &c.

the two following lines ſucceed;

The ſkilful nymph reviews her force with care,
Let Spades be trumps! ſhe ſaid; and trumps they were.

This parody of one of the moſt ſublime paſſages in the Old Teſtament,

" *and*

"*and* GOD *ſaid, Let there be light, and there was light,*" may, I think, be juſtly deemed reprehenſible; as it tends to connect a ludicrous idea with that Being, who ought never to be thought of, but with reverence.* But ſhould this remark appear to be an overſtrained refinement, it will be acknowledged that, in leſs

* Pope ſeems to have been peculiarly fond of alluſions to this paſſage, of the Old Teſtament; but has been a little unfortunate in the application of them. The truth is, that the ſentiment is too ſublime, either for burleſque, or for compliment. And the extravagance of theſe lines, in his epitaph on Sir Iſaac Newton, offends almoſt equally with the parody quoted above.

Nature, and Nature's laws lay hid in night;
GOD *ſaid, Let Newton be!* and all was light.

This hyperbolical encomium is ſuch a profanation of ſacred writ, to monumental flattery, that it was juſtly ſatirized in the following epigram, written by a young man, who has diſcloſed only the initials of his name.

If Newton's exiſtence enlighten'd the whole,
What part of expanſion inhabits the fool?
If light had been total, as Pope hath averr'd,
I. T. had been right, for he could not have err'd:
But Pope has his faults, ſo excuſe a young ſpark;
Bright Newton's deceas'd, and we're all in the dark.

dignified caſes, very ſlight aſſociations, of the burleſque kind, have an aſtoniſhing effect on the ſentiments and taſte of thoſe who form them. When Thomſon's tragedy of Sophoniſba was firſt repreſented on the ſtage, the higheſt expectations were formed of its theatrical merit. But a waggiſh parody on the following line,

O! Sophoniſba! Sophoniſba, O!

damned the reputation of the play; and for a while the town echoed with

O! Jemmy Thomſon! Jemmy Thomſon, O!*

It happened not long ſince, that a perſon of mean rank was elected provoſt, or chief magiſtrate, of Aberdeen. In the firſt moments of elevation, and

* Johnſon's Lives of the Poets; Article, Thomſon.

This celebrated critic, in another part of the ſame work, has well obſerved, that exclamations ſeldom ſucceed in our language: And that the particle O! uſed at the beginning of a ſentence, always offends.

whilſt

whilſt receiving the congratulations of his friends, he laid his hands upon his breaſt, and very emphatically declared, that "*after all he was but a mortal man.*"

Is it poſſible for any one, under the impreſſion of this ludicrous ſtory, to read, without ſmiling, the fact related by Ælian, and quoted with great applauſe by many other hiſtorians, viz. that Philip, king of Macedon, kept a perſon in his ſervice, whoſe office it was to deliver to him, daily, the following admonition; *Remember, Philip, that thou art mortal?* Perhaps, if ſuch an incident had occurred in Greece, during the reign of that monarch, it might have turned into ridicule the admiration, in which his inſtitution was held; by expoſing, at once, the abſurdity, pride, and affected humility, on which it was founded.

The people improperly, becauſe opprobriouſly, called Quakers, certainly merit

a very high degree of eſteem from their fellow citizens, on account of their induſtry, temperance, peaceableneſs, and catholic ſpirit of charity. For notwithſtanding the enthuſiaſtic pretenſions of their founders, to ſuperior ſanctity and Divine inſpiration, they diſclaimed all dominion over faith and conſcience. And Barclay, their learned apologiſt, wrote ably in defence of religious liberty; whilſt Penn, as a lawgiver and civil magiſtrate, eſtabliſhed it, on the broadeſt foundation, in his new government of Penſylvania.* At a period, when bigotry and perſecution were predominant through the Chriſtian world, ſuch rational

* This venerable man was ſuſpected of being a papiſt in diſguiſe, owing to the favour ſhewn him by king James II. To obviate ſo unjuſt an opinion, ſeveral letters were written by him to Dr. Tillotſon, then dean of Canterbury, who, amongſt others, had adopted it; and in one of them he thus expreſſes himſelf. "I know not a jeſuit or a prieſt in the "world: And yet I am a catholic, though not a Roman. "I have bowels for mankind, and dare not deny others, "what I crave for myſelf, I mean, liberty for the exerciſe of "my

rational ſentiments and liberal conduct reflect the higheſt honour on this ſect. But the ſingularity of their apparel, manners, and forms of worſhip, has expoſed them to the keeneſt ſhafts of ridicule. And however illiberally and unjuſtifiably ſuch offenſive weapons may have been employed, they would, in all probability, have prevailed, if the converts and youth of this ſect had not been fortified againſt them, by the moſt unremitting ſtrictneſs of their inſtitutions. Theſe are admirably calculated to correct, or to prevent, all ludicrous aſſociations; and to ſuppreſs, if poſſible, the very principle of laughter, as inconſiſtent with the *ſerioufneſs, gravity, and*

" my religion; thinking faith, piety, and providence, a better " ſecurity than force; and that, when truth cannot prevail " with her own weapons, all others will fail her.---I am no " Roman Catholic, but a Chriſtian, whoſe creed is the " Scripture, of the truth of which I hold a nobler evidence, " than the beſt church authority in the world."

Brit. Biog. Vol. VII.

*godly fear of the Goſpel.** It is aſtoniſhing to obſerve, in a large body of people, the efficacy of a ſet of practical maxims, utterly repugnant to nature: And the influence of them is early viſible, even in their children; who diſplay an invariable ſteadineſs of countenance and deportment, under circumſtances which cover others, of the ſame age, but differently educated, with the bluſhes of baſhful confuſion. But there is now an increaſing relaxation of diſcipline amongſt the members of this reſpectable community; and their diſtinguiſhing modes will gradually ceaſe, as they become more and more combined with the painful ideas of obloquy and deriſion, in the minds of thoſe who adopt them.

Piety to God, whether it reſpects the inward ſentiments and affections of the ſoul, or the outward expreſſions of them in homage and prayer, ought to elevate

* Barclay's Apology for the Quakers, p. 136.

us far above the reach of raillery, or the influence of low and ludicrous aſſociations. But unhappily, both the principle and practice of devotion are too often debaſed by ſuperſtition, deformed by enthuſiaſm, and counterfeited by hypocriſy: And as theſe conſtitute legitimate objects of ridicule and contempt, the ſterling value of piety itſelf becomes depreciated by the union of a baſe and foreign alloy. Such numbers *draw near to the Deity with their lips, whilſt their hearts are far from him*, that a noble writer has ſarcaſtically obſerved, "If we are told a man is religious, we ſtill aſk, what are his morals? "But if we hear at firſt that he has honeſt "morals, and is a man of natural juſtice "and good temper, we ſeldom think of "the other queſtion, whether he be "religious and devout?" * Theſe are conſiderations, which operate powerfully on the mind: And if they be ſtrengthened by the ideas of ungraceful geſtures,

* Lord Shaftſbury's Characteriſtics.

diſſonant

diſſonant tones of voice, or other extravagancies in devotion, ſuch a degree of timidity and falſe delicacy may be created, as entirely to depreſs the fervour, which theſe exerciſes are adapted to excite. Prayer may then be performed as a duty, but will not be felt as a privilege; and the creature will even bluſh at the higheſt honour he can enjoy, that of holding communion with his Creator. Many an ingenuous youth has been deſpoiled of this glorious diſtinction of humanity, by the ſneers and jeſts of his companions: And of the military profeſſion it is ſaid, that an officer would rather face the mouth of a cannon, than be found privately in the poſture of ſupplication. Dr. Swift ſeems to have been governed, in his religious obſervances, by ſome ſuch ill-grounded aſſociation. His conſtant preſence at church, whilſt he reſided at the deanery of St. Patrick's, he knew would be expected; but he was ſedulouſly careful to conceal whatever

whatever had the appearance of voluntary devotion. When he was in London, therefore, he never attended divine ſervice, but at a very early hour in the morning. And though he practiſed family prayer in his houſe, his ſervants aſſembled, as it were, by ſtealth; ſo that Dr. Delany lived ſix months with him, before he diſcovered it.*

I hope it will not be underſtood, from what has been advanced on the topic of ludicrous aſſociations, that I am averſe to laughter, or an enemy to wit and pleaſantry. Human life, without their exhilarating influence, would be a ſcene

* Brit. Biog. Vol. VIII. Johnſon's Lives of the Poets, Article Swift.

Dr. Swift furniſhes an excellent ſubject for the moral anatomiſt. His life was eventful; his paſſions were various and ſtrong; and his ſenſibilities acute in the extreme. Self-indulgence gave every ſpring to action, within him, its full power; and pride prevented the concealment of its operation. Hence the motives, which directed his conduct, were ſeldom either extraneous or complex; and they are generally eaſy to be traced to their ſource.

of

of anxious care, or phlegmatic dulneſs. Nor is the harſher controul of ridicule to be wholly condemned or rejected. It is neceſſary to reſtrain the irregular ſallies of folly; and, as theſe often proceed from a lively imagination, the ſenſe of it is happily acuteſt, where its correction is moſt required.

IV. There are few people, who have not, at particular ſeaſons, experienced the effect of certain accidental aſſociations, which obtrude one impertinent idea, or ſet of ideas, on the mind, to the excluſion of every other. Mr. Locke has noticed this weakneſs, and he humourouſly deſcribes it, "as a childiſhneſs "of the underſtanding, wherein, during "the fit, it plays with and dandles ſome "inſignificant puppet, without any end "in view."* Thus, a tune, a proverb,

* Locke's Conduct of the Underſtanding.

a ſcrap

a ſcrap of poetry, or ſome other trivial object, will ſteal into the thoughts, and continue to poſſeſs them long after it ceaſes to be amuſing. Perſuaſives to diſmiſs a gueſt that proves ſo troubleſome, can hardly be neceſſary; and bodily exertion is generally the beſt remedy for this mental infirmity. But there is another ſtate of mind, dependent on the laws of aſſociation, which is more dangerous, becauſe it invites to indulgence. It conſiſts in reveries, gay viſions of fancy, the creation of air-built caſtles, and cobweb *hypotheſes*. Men of genius alone are incident to theſe flattering deluſions; and they too often implicitly give way to them. But in proportion as they prevail, reaſon and judgment are impaired; ſtudy becomes formal dulneſs; activity toilſome; and the neceſſary offices of life are neglected. Thomſon has thus beautifully pictured ſuch a character.

There was a man of ſpecial grave remark;
A certain tender gloom o'erſpread his face,
Penſive, not ſad, in thought involv'd, not dark;
As ſweet this wight could ſing as morning lark,
And teach the nobleſt morals of the heart:
But theſe his talents were y' buried ſtark.

To noon-tide ſhades incontinent he ran,
Where purls the brook with ſleep inviting ſound,
There would he linger till the lateſt ray
Of light ſat trembling on the welkin's bound.
Oft as he travers'd the cœrulean field,
And mark'd the clouds, that drove before the wind,
Ten thouſand glorious ſyſtems would he build,
Ten thouſand great ideas fill'd his mind;
But with the clouds they fell, and left no trace behind. *

V. It has been remarked, that gameſters, ſailors, and others, who are under the influence of what is vulgarly, but very improperly, termed *chance*, that is, of cauſes not within the reach of human power to direct, nor of human ſagacity

* Thomſon's Caſtle of Indolence, Canto I.

to

to diſcern, are extremely prone to ſuperſtition. Their hopes and fears, their confidence and deſpair, are founded on circumſtances, which bear only a fanciful relation to the events, that are to come. Imagination connects the ideas of magnitude and importance with the ſlighteſt cauſes, which are viewed in obſcurity; as objects appear largeſt to our ſenſes during twilight. A gameſter lays great ſtreſs on the luck of a ſeat, or the ſhake of a die: And I remember, in croſſing a ferry, whilſt it was very calm, the boatman whiſtled more than three hours a particular ſet of notes, to forward the motion of his veſſel, crying out, at ſhort intervals, *Blow, good wind, blow; blow a briſk gale!* And if a gentle gale ſprung up, he redoubled his efforts, in the fulleſt aſſurance of ſucceſs. The abſolute truſt, repoſed in empirical medicines, ariſes from a ſimilar deception; and the miraculous operation, often aſcribed to them, even by perſons of judgment and education,

education, is a proof of the aſtoniſhing power of wrong aſſociations. The wiſe emperor Marcus Aurelius was ſo firmly perſuaded of the efficacy of a certain antidote, called *theriaca*, to reſiſt every ſpecies of poiſon, that he made uſe of it daily, to the great injury of his health. For his head became affected to ſuch a degree, that he dozed in the midſt of buſineſs; and when opium was left out of the compoſition, an obſtinate watchfulneſs enſued.*

The ſame principle of aſſociation explains the dogmatiſm of the critic, and the antiquarian; whoſe poſitiveneſs, reſpecting the conſtruction of a ſentence, or the letters of a worn-out inſcription, is often in exact proportion to their uncertainty. When any one ſoars, with great ardour, into the regions of conjecture, the airy phantoms, which he meets with, will be contemplated by

* Galen de Antidotis, Lib. I. C. 1.

him

him as ſubſtantial realities: And he will purſue truth, not with a temperate and rational zeal, but with the blind enthuſiaſm of love; dignifying, like a paſſionate *inamorato*, every conceit of his mind, and admiring diſcoveries which exiſt no where, but in his own brain. Theſe reflections have been, in part, ſuggeſted by the peruſal of the memoirs of Mr. Whiſton; a man, whoſe genius, learning, and integrity, might have placed him high in the ſcale of excellence, had he not ſuffered a perverted imagination to uſurp the juſt authority of judgment. "The warmth of his temper diſpoſed "him to receive any ſudden thoughts, "any thing, that ſtruck his fancy, when "favourable to his preconceived ſcheme "of things, or to any new ſchemes of "things, which ſerved, in his opinion, "a religious purpoſe."* With ſuch propenſities he wrote *An Eſſay on the Revelation of St. John:* And being appointed,

* Mr. Collins.

the following year (1707), to preach Mr. Boyle's lectures, he choſe for his ſubject, the *accompliſhment of Scripture prophecies*. In 1712, when prince Eugene of Savoy was in England, he dedicated a work to him, in which *he interpreted the end of the hour, and day, and month, and year, for the Ottoman devaſtations, Apoc.* 9.15. *to have been put by his glorious victory over the Turks, September* 1, 1697. *O. S. or the ſucceeding peace of Carlowitz,* 1698.* His favourite conceptions were now ſo ſtrongly rivetted in his mind, that he diſcerned clearly all the revolutions of paſt and future ages, in the writings of the Prophets, or the revelations of St. John. Such indeed was the aſcendency of theſe abſurd aſſociations over his underſtanding, that he gave entire credit to the impudent impoſture of Mary Tofts,

* Prince Eugene ſeems to have been pleaſed with the honour of the diſcovery, that he was the object of ſo ancient a prediction; for he preſented Mr. Whiſton, on this occaſion, with a purſe of gold. See Brit. Biog. Vol. VIII. p. 247.

a woman

a woman of Godalmin, who pretended to be delivered of rabbits, becauſe her monſtrous births were deemed, by him, to be the exact completion of an old prediction in Eſdras.*

In almoſt every caſe of wrong aſſociations, the underſtanding either voluntarily ſuſpends its controling and directing power, or is deluded into a conformity with fancy; and the mind ſtill retains a conſciouſneſs of freedom, and of moral agency. But there are certain habits, which uſurp, by *force*, the dominion of reaſon, and compel the will to gratify inordinate deſires, by the choice of known evil, in preference to acknowledged good. The lamentation of the poet, *video meliora proboque, deteriora ſequor*, ſeems alſo to have been felt by St. Paul, who ſays, Rom. vii. 11. *That which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that I do*

* Gent. Mag. July 1781, p. 321.

not; but what I hate, that I do. If then I do that, which I would not, I conſent unto the law, that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do, but ſin that dwelleth in me. If an enlightened Apoſtle ſpeaks in ſuch abaſing terms of himſelf, with how much more truth and propriety might the ſame language have been adopted, by a late advocate for the divine diſpenſation of the Goſpel. For charity inclines me to hope, that the learned author of the Chriſtian Hero *wrote* in conſiſtency with, whilſt he *acted* in oppoſition to, his moſt ſerious conviction. This work, Sir Richard Steele informs us,* was compoſed by him, principally with a view to contraſt impreſſions of piety and virtue, with the ſtrong propenſity, which he experienced, to licentious pleaſures. For he ſays, even when rioting in ſcenes of debauchery, he was deeply conſcious of the impropriety of his conduct, and

* See his Apology for himſelf and his writings.

condemned

condemned thoſe unlawful gratifications, which he had not reſolution to renounce. His Chriſtian Hero, however, whilſt the treatiſe remained privately in his own hands, afforded but a weak and ineffectual check to his vicious purſuits. He, therefore, determined to publiſh it; that, by thus placing himſelf in a new light, before his acquaintance, he might be reſtrained from guilt, by an explicit and avowed teſtimony in favour of goodneſs. But it does not appear that this ſingular experiment proved ſucceſsful. Steele forſook not his debaucheries; and by having affected the ſaint, he aggravated, in the opinion of his friends, his condemnation as a ſinner. Yet, Mr. Pope, who knew him well, juſtified him from the imputation of hypocriſy; and always regarded him as a real lover of virtue, in *theory*, though a ſlave to vice, in *practice*.*

* Ruffhead's Life of Pope, p. 493. Brit. Biog. Vol. VIII.

Many other examples might be adduced of the force of evil habits, and the pernicious influence of falſe aſſociations, whether intellectual or moral: But to dwell long on the ſhades of the human character, is apt to abate our benevolence to mankind; and to impair the principle of veneration, towards the great Author of our nature. More pleaſing would be the taſk, and I will add, more eaſy too, to vindicate the wiſdom of the Divine laws, by ſhewing, that the power of habit, and the propenſity to combine ideas together, are eſſential to the juſt conſtitution of the mind: And that, without their well regulated aid, knowledge would be unattainable, virtue a tranſient emotion or deſultory act, and life itſelf a ſcene of indifference and inſipidity,

ON

INCONSISTENCY OF EXPECTATION,

IN

LITERARY PURSUITS.

RETINUIT, QUOD EST DIFFICILLIMUM, EX SAPIENTIA MODUM.

TACIT. VIT. AGRICOL.

ON

INCONSISTENCY OF EXPECTATION,

IN

LITERARY PURSUITS.

He, who hath treaſures of his own,
May leave a cottage, or a throne;
May quit the world to dwell alone,
Within his ſpacious mind.

WHERE, amongſt the men of Science, is the Archetype to be found, of a picture ſo flattering to human pride? The original, from which it appears to have been drawn, was, indeed, an exalted character; but at the ſame time, alas! a feeble valetudinarian, who muſt have experienced thoſe mortifying

ing impediments to mental exertion, which ariſe from a conſtitution naturally delicate, and broken by laborious reſearches into truth. Under ſuch circumſtances, could it be affirmed, that

> Locke had a ſoul,
> Wide as the ſea,
> Calm as the night,
> Bright as the day;
> There might his vaſt ideas play,
> Nor feel a thought confin'd.

The amiable Poet,* who has thus pourtrayed, with the glowing colours of admiration and reſpect, one of the moſt diſtinguiſhed ornaments of the human ſpecies, paſſed himſelf a life of lingering ſickneſs: And, though his genius was fertile, and his induſtry wonderfully and variouſly productive, yet, ſuch was his ſenſibility of the obſtructions he had to ſurmount, that he made a painful and

* Dr. Watts.

humiliating

humiliating calculation of the days, months, and years, which he had loſt, even by his ſlighteſt malady, the tooth-ach. The celebrated M. Paſcal languiſhed, four years, under a diſtemper, which, without manifeſting itſelf by many outward ſigns, or occaſioning confinement, debarred him of the pleaſures and improvements of ſtudy. And it was the anxious office of his friends, to guard him from writing, or ſpeaking on any topics, which might exerciſe much thought or attention.* Mr. Pope's vital functions were ſo diſordered, that his life is emphatically ſaid to have been a *long diſeaſe*. The head-ach was his moſt frequent aſſailant; and he uſed to relieve it, by inhaling the ſteams of coffee, which he often required during thoſe hours, that ſhould have afforded the refreſhment of ſleep: Such was his earneſtneſs and ſolicitude in the proſecu-

* Preface to Paſcal's Thoughts.

tion

tion of his literary undertakings, that Swift complains, he was never at leiſure for converſation. And one of lord Oxford's domeſtics related, that in the ſevere winter of 1740, ſhe was called from her bed four times, in one night, to ſupply him with paper, that he might not loſe a thought.* The learned biographer, who, with all the ſeverity of ſarcaſm, records this fact, acknowledges, in the preface to the moſt laborious of his works, that he himſelf *triumphed* in the acquiſitions, which he ſhould diſplay to mankind: and indulged all the dreams of a Poet doomed, at laſt, to wake a Lexicographer. For he found that "one enquiry only gave occaſion "to another, that book referred to "book; that to ſearch was not always "to find; and to find was not always "to be informed; and that thus to pur-"ſue perfection, was, like the firſt in-"habitants of Arcadia, to chace the

* Johnſon's Lives of the Poets.

"ſun,

"ſun, which, when they had reached "the hill where he ſeemed to reſt, was "ſtill beheld at the ſame diſtance from "them." There is a paſſage in Thomſon's *Caſtle of Indolence*, ſo applicable to this kind of folly, that I am tempted to tranſcribe it.

This globe pourtray'd the race of learned men,
Still at their books, and turning o'er the page,
Backwards and forwards: oft they ſnatch the pen,
As if inſpir'd, and in a Theſpian rage,
Then write and blot, as would your ruth engage.
Why, authors! all this ſcrawl and ſcribbling ſore?
To loſe the preſent, gain the future age,
Praiſed to be, when you can hear no more;
And much enrich'd with fame, when uſeleſs worldly ſtore?*

The examples, which I have recited, are of men occupied chiefly, if not ſolely, in the walks of literature. But the taſte for knowledge may be cultivated, ſucceſsfully, in the buſy ſcenes of active

* Thomſon's Caſtle of Indolence, Canto I.

life.

life. And under theſe circumſtances, aſtoniſhing proficiency has been made, by the combined powers of genius and induſtry. The works of Tully, Pliny the elder, Bacon, Temple, and Bolingbroke, not to mention various other names of ancient and modern times, are ſufficient evidences of this fact. But neither the efforts of genius nor of induſtry can ward off ſickneſs, obviate ſolicitude, or ſtop thoſe unaccountable ebbings of the mind, which even a lowering ſky will ſometimes produce. Cicero, notwithſtanding all his exultation, on the ſoothing influence of philoſophy, found himſelf under the neceſſity of retiring, at certain ſeaſons, to one of his country villas, ſituated near Aſtura. And in this ſolitary reſidence, which was covered with a thick wood, cut into ſhady walks, he uſed to paſs his hours of ſpleen and melancholy.*

* Middleton's Life of Cicero, Vol. III. p. 296.

But

But could we ſuppoſe health to be enjoyed without interruption, the ſpirits to be always lively and active, and all the intellectual faculties in a ſtate of uniform compoſure and energy, yet ſtill the progreſs in knowledge would be retarded by error, and obſtructed by the want of thoſe materials, for which we muſt depend on the accuracy, induſtry, and attainments of others. The temple of ſcience requires, for its elevation, the united labours of myriads of different artiſts; and the conſtruction of it will be perpetually incident to delays, by the indolence, unſkilfulneſs, and miſtakes of thoſe, who are employed in the undertaking. In ſuch circumſtances, to unite ardour with ſerenity, an enthuſiaſm for ſcience with patience under all the obſtructions of purſuit, from outward accident or inward infirmity, is a happineſs, of which few can boaſt.* And the page

* Sir Iſaac Newton affords a ſingular example of temperate ardour, unremitting energy, and almoſt invariable equanimity.

of

of biography is filled with narratives of the querulouſneſs, impaired health, and mental imbecility of thoſe, who, by their writings, have informed, enlightened, and charmed mankind. Juſt views of the deſigns of Providence, in the government of the world, and particularly in the ſtructure of the human mind with reſpect to the progreſſive evolution of its faculties, would tend to obviate theſe evils, by reſtraining the inordinate aſpirations of literary ambition, and by correcting the inconſiſtency of expectation, from which they proceed.

Man is evidently conſtituted for two great ends; the attainment of virtue, and of knowledge. All his mental endowments have a reference to one or other of theſe final cauſes: On them, therefore, muſt depend the *perfection*, and *felicity* of his nature. But his moral powers ſeem more circumſcribed in their operation, and conſequently to admit of leſs extenſive

ſive culture, than thoſe of his underſtanding. For they are confined within the limits of rational, or at moſt of ſenſitive being, and with ſuch they can hold only a partial, and contracted correſpondence: whilſt the intellectual faculties have, for their object, the whole ſyſtem of nature, the infinitude of which is, perhaps, not leſs apparent in its minuteneſs, than immenſity. From theſe conſiderations, I am inclined to believe, that our ſtation, in the preſent world, is intended for near approaches towards the *maturity* of *virtue*; but for the *infancy* only of *knowledge*. And the wiſdom of this ordinance, of the Deity, is ſufficiently diſcernible. For as *knowledge* is *power*, the antecedent poſſeſſion of goodneſs, to direct it, muſt be eſſentially neceſſary to beatitude. The paſſions and affections are of ſpeedy growth, and often manifeſt great vigour in that ſeaſon of life, which is marked by the feebleneſs of reaſon. Increaſing years modify, direct, and me-

liorate them; but the diſcipline of experience ſerves rather to balance and reſtrain, than to augment their native ſtrength and energy. On the contrary, the mind proceeds by ſlow and regular gradations, in the attainment of ſcience. And our acquiſitions conſiſt not, ſolely, in the diſcovery of new objects or phænomena; but in the compariſon of theſe with what we already know,* and in aſcertaining their reciprocal dependencies, relations, or contrarieties. Thus knowledge is multiplied beyond the ſum of its ſeparate and component parts: And every acceſſion to it increaſes the ſtock in a ratio, that, we may devoutly truſt, will become greater and greater through all eternity.

But the bulk of mankind, in this ſtage of exiſtence, are in circumſtances, which preclude any conſiderable advancement

* Maclaurin's View of Sir Iſaac Newton's Philoſophy.

in

in learning. And we may obſerve, that the diſpenſation of the Goſpel gives no *direct* encouragement to it,* but applies all its precepts and exhortations to the cultivation of the heart. For the principles and practice of virtue are accommodated to every period and condition of life; and are exerciſed, refined, and exalted even by poverty, infirmity, ſickneſs, and old age; all which check the exertions, and depreſs the vigour of human genius. Rectitude of diſpoſition and of conduct bears a preciſe and permanent relation to all times, perſons, and occurrences. And if we aſcend from particular to general excellence, by contemplating the duty of man in the aggregate, we may form a diſtinct and

* Many paſſages, in the New Teſtament, according to a literal interpretation, ſeem *directly levelled againſt* human learning; which is deſcribed as vain, deceitful, traditionary, conſiſting of endleſs genealogies, idle babblings, and profane fables. But the beſt commentators are of opinion, that theſe cenſures have a reference only to the abſurd philoſophy of the Gnoſtics or Sophiſts, which was derived from the Egyptians.

adequate idea of *moral perfection.* But what mind can expand itſelf to the conception of *complete intelligence!*—Every ſtep of our aſcent, on the hill of ſcience, preſents to the view a widening horizon; and the boundary of darkneſs increaſes, in proportion to the amplitude of thoſe enlightened regions, which it incircles.

It is this endleſs progreſſion of knowledge, which is apt to give the *love* of it an inordinate aſcendency over every other principle, ſo as to render it the *ruling paſſion* of the mind. And, as this paſſion does not, like the love of virtue, temper its particular exertions, by preſerving a due ſubordination in the powers which it calls forth into action, the wildeſt extravagances, of emotion and of conduct, have been diſplayed by thoſe, who ſubmit to its uncontrouled dominion. A great philoſopher has ruſhed naked, from the bath,

into

into the ſtreets of a populous city, frantic with joy, on the ſolution of an intereſting problem. Tacitus informs us, that his excellent father-in-law Agricola "was inclined to have engaged more "deeply, in the ſtudies of philoſophy "and law, than was ſuitable to a Roman "and a ſenator, if the diſcretion of his "mother had not reſtrained the warmth "and vehemence of his diſpoſition: "For his high ſpirit, inflamed by the "charms of glory and exalted reputa-"tion, led him to the purſuit, with "more eagerneſs than judgment. Rea-"ſon, and riper years, mitigated his "ardour; and, what is a *moſt difficult taſk*, "*he preſerved moderation in ſcience itſelf.*"* The emperor Marcus Antoninus, in one of his meditations, expreſſes fervent gratitude to the gods, that, by their favour, he had made no further advances in

* Tacitus in Vit. Agric. See, alſo, Mr. Aikin's elegant tranſlation of this admirable piece of Biography, p. 65.

rhetoric, poetry, and other amuſing ſtudies; that he had not beſtowed too much time on voluminous reading, logical diſputations, or reſearches into phyſics; becauſe theſe might have engroſſed his mind, or diverted his attention from the peculiar duties of his elevated ſtation.* Juſt and weighty, therefore, is the maxim of another ancient moraliſt, with which I ſhall conclude theſe reflections, that *we ſhould not reſt ſatisfied with the* WORDS *of wiſdom, without the* WORKS; *nor turn philoſophy into an idle pleaſure, which was given us for a ſalutary remedy.*†

* Marc. Antonin. Lib. I. † Seneca.

ON THE

ADVANTAGES OF A TASTE

FOR THE GENERAL

BEAUTIES OF NATURE,

AND OF ART.

ME VERO PRIMUM DULCES ANTE OMNIA MUSÆ
ACCIPIANT! ----------

VIRG.

QUID MINUAT CURAS, QUID TE TIBI REDDAT
AMICUM.

HOR.

SECTION I.

ON THE

BEAUTIES OF NATURE.

THAT ſenſibility to beauty, which, when cultivated and improved, we term Taſte, is univerſally diffuſed through the human ſpecies: And it is moſt uniform with reſpect to thoſe objects, which, being out of our power, are not liable to variation, from accident, caprice, or faſhion. The verdant lawn, the ſhady grove, the variegated landſcape, the boundleſs ocean, and the ſtarry firmament, are contemplated with pleaſure by every attentive beholder.

But

But the emotions of different ſpectators, though ſimilar in kind, differ widely in degree: And to reliſh, with full delight, the enchanting ſcenes of nature, the mind muſt be uncorrupted by avarice, ſenſuality, or ambition; quick in her ſenſibilities; elevated in her ſentiments; and devout in her affections. He, who poſſeſſes ſuch exalted powers of perception and enjoyment, may almoſt ſay, with the Poet,

"I care not, Fortune! what you me deny;
"You cannot rob me of free Nature's grace;
"You cannot ſhut the windows of the ſky,
"Thro' which Aurora ſhews her brightening face;
"You cannot bar my conſtant feet to trace
"The woods and lawns, by living ſtream, at eve:
"Let health my nerves and finer fibres brace,
"And I their toys to the great children leave:
"Of fancy, reaſon, virtue, nought can me bereave."*

Perhaps ſuch ardent enthuſiaſm may not be compatible with the neceſſary

* Thomſon's Caſtle of Indolence.

toils,

toils, and active offices, which Providence has aſſigned to the generality of men. But there are none, to whom ſome portion of it may not prove advantageous; and if it were cheriſhed, by each individual, in that degree which is conſiſtent with the indiſpenſable duties of his ſtation, the felicity of human life would be conſiderably augmented. From this ſource, the refined and vivid pleaſures of the imagination are almoſt entirely derived: And the elegant arts owe their choiceſt beauties to a taſte for the contemplation of nature. Painting and ſculpture are expreſs imitations of viſible objects: And where would be the charms of poetry, if diveſted of the imagery and embelliſhments, which ſhe borrows from rural ſcenes? Painters, ſtatuaries, and poets, therefore, are always ambitious to acknowledge themſelves the pupils of nature; and as their ſkill increaſes, they grow more and more delighted with every view of the animal

and

and vegetable world. But the pleaſure reſulting from admiration is tranſient; and to cultivate taſte, without regard to its influence on the paſſions and affections, "is to rear a tree for its bloſſoms, "which is capable of yielding the richeſt, "and moſt valuable fruit."* Phyſical and moral beauty bear ſo intimate a relation to each other, that they may be conſidered as different gradations in the ſcale of excellence; and the knowledge and reliſh of the former, ſhould be deemed only a ſtep to the nobler and more permanent enjoyments of the latter.

Whoever has viſited the Leaſowes, in Shropſhire, muſt have felt the force and propriety of an inſcription, which meets the eye, at the entrance into thoſe delightful grounds.

"Would you then taſte the tranquil ſcene?
"Be ſure your boſoms be ſerene;

* Shenſtone.

"Devoid

" Devoid of hate, devoid of ſtrife,
" Devoid of all that poiſons life:
" And much it 'vails you, in their place
" To graft the love of human race."*

Now ſuch ſcenes contribute powerfully to inſpire that ſerenity, which is neceſſary to enjoy, and to heighten their beauties. By a ſecret contagion, the ſoul catches the harmony, which ſhe contemplates; and the frame within, aſſimilates itſelf to that which is without. For,

" Who can forbear to ſmile with Nature? Can
" The ſtormy paſſions in the boſom roll,
" While every gale is peace, and every grove
" Is melody?"†

* Shenſtone.

† Thomſon's Seaſons, firſt Edit.

Horace, when he breaks forth into the animated exclamation,

" *O, rus! quando ego te aſpiciam, quandoque licebit*
" *Nunc veterum libris, nunc ſomno et inertibus horis*
" *Ducere ſolicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ;*"

ſeems to regret the want of that heartfelt complacency, which the buſtle, pomp, and pleaſures of imperial Rome could not afford.

In

In this ſtate of ſweet compoſure, we become ſuſceptible of virtuous impreſſions, from almoſt every ſurrounding object. The patient ox is viewed with generous complacency; the guileleſs ſheep, with pity; and the playful lamb raiſes emotions of tenderneſs and love. We rejoice with the horſe, in his liberty and exemption from toil, whilſt he ranges at large through enamelled paſtures; and the frolics of the colt would afford unmixed delight, did we not recollect the bondage, which he is ſoon to undergo. We are charmed with the ſongs of birds, ſoothed with the buzz of inſects, and pleaſed with the ſportive motions of fiſhes, becauſe theſe are expreſſions of enjoyment; and we exult in the felicity of the whole animated creation. Thus an equal and extenſive benevolence is called forth into exertion; and having *felt* a common intereſt in the gratifications of inferior beings, we ſhall be no longer indifferent

indifferent to their ſufferings, or become wantonly inſtrumental in producing them.

It ſeems to be the intention of Providence, that the lower orders of animals ſhould be ſubſervient to the comfort, convenience, and ſuſtenance of man. But his right of dominion extends no farther; and if this right be exerciſed with mildneſs, humanity, and juſtice, the ſubjects of his power will be no leſs benefitted than himſelf. For various ſpecies of living creatures are annually multiplied by human art, improved in their perceptive powers by human culture, and plentifully fed by human induſtry. The relation, therefore, is reciprocal, between ſuch animals and man; and he may ſupply his own wants by the uſe of their labour, the produce of their bodies, and even the ſacrifice of their lives; whilſt he co-operates with all-gracious Heaven, in promoting HAPPINESS, the great end of exiſtence.

But

But though it be true, that *partial evil*, with reſpect to different orders of ſenſitive beings, may be *univerſal good*; and that it is a wiſe and benevolent inſtitution of nature, to make deſtruction itſelf, within certain limitations, the cauſe of an increaſe of life and enjoyment; yet a generous perſon will extend his compaſſionate regards to every individual, that ſuffers for his ſake: And, whilſt he ſighs

"Ev'n for the kid, or lamb, that pours its life
"Beneath the bloody knife;" *

he will naturally be ſolicitous to mitigate pain, both in duration and degree, by the gentleſt modes of inflicting it.

I am inclined to believe, however, that this ſenſe of humanity would ſoon be obliterated, and that the heart would grow callous to every ſoft impreſſion, were it not for the benignant influence

* Lord Lyttelton.

of

of the ſmiling face of nature. The Count de Lauzun, when impriſoned by Louis XIV. in the caſtle of Pignerol, amuſed himſelf, during a long period of time, with catching flies, and delivering them to be devoured by a rapacious ſpider. Such an entertainment was equally ſingular and cruel; and inconſiſtent, I believe, with his former character, and ſubſequent turn of mind. But his cell had no window; and received only a glimmering light, from an aperture in the roof. In leſs unfavourable circumſtances, may we not preſume, that inſtead of ſporting with miſery, he would have releaſed the agoniſing flies; and bid them enjoy that freedom, of which he himſelf was bereaved?

But the taſte for natural beauty is ſubſervient to higher purpoſes, than thoſe which have been enumerated: And the cultivation of it not only refines and humaniſes, but dignifies and exalts the

affections. It elevates them to the admiration and love of that Being, who is the Author of all that is fair, ſublime, and good in the creation. Scepticiſm and irreligion are hardly compatible with the ſenſibility of heart,* which ariſes from a juſt and lively reliſh of the wiſdom, harmony, and order ſubſiſting in the world around us: And emotions of piety muſt ſpring up ſpontaneouſly in the boſom, that is in uniſon with all animated nature. Actuated by this divine inſpiration, man finds a fane in every grove: And glowing with devout fervour, he joins his ſong to the univerſal chorus; or muſes the praiſe of the Almighty, in more expreſſive ſilence. Thus they

"Whom Nature's works can charm, with God himſelf
"Hold converſe; grow familiar, day by day,
"With his conceptions; act upon his plan;
"And form to his, the reliſh of their ſouls." †

* See Gregory's Comparative View. † Akenſide.

SECTION

SECTION II.

ON

A GENERAL TASTE FOR THE

FINE ARTS.

THE analogy of phyſical to moral beauty, and the connection ſubſiſting between a good heart, and a juſt reliſh for the general works of nature, have, I truſt, been fully eſtabliſhed. But, though all mankind are endued with the principle or faculty of taſte, it often lies almoſt entirely dormant, for want of cultivation. The ſavage Indian, wholly

occupied in providing for the neceſſities of life, traverſes the deſart, and the flowery lawn, with equal indifference. Eager in the chaſe, he ſcarcely turns his eye, as he paſſes along, to contemplate the golden beams of the ſetting ſun, reflected from the lake of Erie. Or if he quit his native wilds, in the ſummer ſeaſon, to fiſh in the river Ohio, he ſits in his canoe, inattentive to the awful cataract, and views the moſt ſplendid ſcene in the creation, with ſlight and tranſient emotions. Nor are the generality of men, even in civiliſed ſociety, or in the higher walks of life, fully qualified to comprehend or to admire the *aſſemblage* of beauties, which the viſible creation preſents to the view of an enlightened imagination. Single objects, or detached parts, attract the notice and engroſs the attention: And the mind, by an eaſy tranſition, paſſes to the recognition and reliſh of thoſe operations of

of human ſkill, which are their ſymbols, or repreſentations. For the elegant arts are all imitative in their eſſence and origin. Thus muſic, by the variation of its movements and tones, calls up, into the mind, ideas both of the natural, animal, and rational world. The murmuring brook, and boiſterous ocean; the ſtormy wind, and gentle zephyr; the wild roar of the lion, the bleating of the lamb, and the plaintive melody of the nightingale, are all within the compaſs of its mimetic enchantments. Theſe are extended even to the paſſions and emotions of the human heart; ſo as to typify anger, pity, remorſe, delight, and ſorrow. Painting occupies a ſtill wider field of ſimilitude and aſſociation; diſplaying all thoſe objects, which are known to us, in nature, by diverſity of figure, or the various ſhades of colour. Even motions and ſounds may be expreſſed by this wonderful art. For, as

they are accompanied, in many inſtances, with a certain configuration, or poſition of parts, the ſign is readily adopted for the thing ſignified. And we ſee or hear upon the canvas, the horſe *ſtarting* aghaſt at the ſudden view of the lion; the ſoldier *running* towards his dying general with the news of victory; the cock *crowing* at the denial of Peter; and the water-fall *daſhing* againſt the rocks below.*

Poetry, under which term I mean to comprehend all numerous and rhetorical compoſition, derives moſt of its charms from alluſions, ſimilies, metaphors, or deſcriptions; and theſe are obviouſly imitative. In this way, its powers are ſo tranſcendant, that even a ſingle epithet will ſometimes produce a repreſentation more pictureſque, than the pencil of Pouſſin, or Salvator Roſa, ever ex-

* Mr. Stubbs's Picture. The death of General Wolfe, &c.

hibited.

hibited. The firſt line, in the following ſtanza of Gray's elegy, will afford an example, and a proof, of what is here advanced.

Now fades the *glimmering* landſcape on the ſight,
And all the air a ſolemn ſtillneſs holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowſy tinklings lull the diſtant folds.*

The accuracy and force of the word *glimmering* muſt be felt by any one, who has viewed, with attention, an extenſive proſpect, about an hour after ſun-ſet.

The mimetic arts have ſome advantages over nature herſelf; for the imitations, with which they preſent us, are generally agreeable, even though their archetypes be, in themſelves, indifferent or diſguſting. The mind delights in compariſon; and this pleaſure is heightened

* Gray's Elegy.

by the recognition of reſemblance, and by the contemplation of ingenious deſign, or maſterly execution. Who can read Mr. Gay's deſcription of a poor, benighted traveller, without being charmed at the veriſimilitude of the narration; which is, at once, ſo clear, ſo diſcriminative, and circumſtantial, that we become, as it were, ſpectators of a ſcene, which either in its parts, or in the whole, is exactly correſpondent to our recollection and experience.

It is evident, therefore, that the fine arts have, for their object, the gratification of the ſame faculty, which perceives and reliſhes the charms of nature. And by analogy we may infer, that the exerciſe, which they give to the taſte, is favourable to the virtuous affections of the heart. This truth has been ſo long acknowledged, that the obſervation of

* Ovid.

the

the Poet is now received, as an eſtabliſhed maxim in ethics;

Ingenuas didiciſſe fideliter artes
Emollit mores, nec ſinit eſſe feros. *

But the validity of this canon is not to be admitted, without ſome reſtriction. The energies of muſic, painting, and poetry, are ſo powerful and multifarious, that they have, at command, all the emotions and paſſions of the ſoul.

- - - - - - - - - - *pectus inaniter angunt,*
Irritant, mulcent, falſis terroribus implent. *

They may excite or reſtrain, kindle or extinguiſh paſſion, and thus, according to their application, become the inſtruments either of vice, or of virtue. They are incident, likewiſe, to numberleſs adventitious aſſociations, which, counteracting or diverſifying their natural and original tendency, may make them adminiſter to vanity, oſtentation, pride,

* Hor. Epiſt. I. Lib. 2.

envy,

envy, and jealouſy. Such diſpoſitions are ſometimes found in the profeſſors of theſe arts; and the diſplay of them, in men of diſtinguiſhed genius and merit, raiſes in our minds a painful ſtruggle of diſcordant emotions.*

Whoever, therefore, yields himſelf, implicitly, to the magic deluſions of the fine arts, is in danger of having his judgment impaired, his heart corrupted, and his capacity deſtroyed for the ordinary duties and enjoyments of life. To this ſource may be traced all the follies and extravagance of what is termed VERTU. Admiration ſtimulates the deſire of poſſeſſion, however immoderate the price; poſſeſſion turns the admiration of the object to ourſelves; and this is ſuc-

* Who would not laugh, if ſuch a one there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he? POPE.

No reflection is meant, by the quotation of theſe lines, on the very reſpectable character to whom they allude. They were dictated by reſentment, and reprobated by ſome of the Poet's beſt friends.

ceeded

ceeded by a fond and abſurd impatience to diſplay a ſuperiority over others, both in taſte and property.

> What brought Sir Viſto's ill got wealth to waſte?
> Some dæmon whiſper'd, "Viſto, have a taſte."
> Heaven viſits with a taſte the wealthy fool;
> And needs no rod, but Ripley with a rule.*

But it is further to be obſerved, that, as an acute reliſh for beauty, and a quick diſcernment of deformity are, in a certain proportion, neceſſarily connected together; the latter may become predominant, through pride, affectation, or too frequent indulgence. Whenever this happens, taſte will prove the inſtrument of pain, and not of pleaſure: And the faſtidious feelings of diſguſt, ſo often excited, will be transferred, from the works of human ſkill, to human life; rendering the temper petulant, moroſe, and ſelfiſh. But a perverſion of the

* Pope's Moral Eſſays.

powers

powers of the imagination is no argument againſt their proper culture, and well regulated application. For reaſon itſelf is liable to abuſe; and philoſophy and religion have been rendered ſubſervient to ſcepticiſm and ſuperſtition.

MISCELLANEOUS

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE ALLIANCE OF

NATURAL HISTORY, AND PHILOSOPHY,

WITH POETRY.

---------- NIL SCRIBENS IPSE DOCEBO
UNDE PARENTUR OPES; QUID ALAT FORMETQUE
POETAM.

---------- VATIBUS ADDERE CALCAR.
HOR.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS ON THE ALLIANCE OF NATURAL HISTORY, AND PHILOSOPHY, WITH POETRY.*

THE maxim of lord Verulam, that "knowledge is power," is no leſs applicable to poeſy, than to philoſophy. For whether we engage in this delightful purſuit as an art, or as a ſcience, it is evident that the ability to convey, and the capacity to reliſh its peculiar plea-

* In this Eſſay, the author has confined his views, chiefly, to the application of natural knowledge, to that branch of the poetic art, which relates to DESCRIPTION; reſerving, for ſome future occaſion, the alliance of phyſics, with poetical IMAGERY and MORAL ANALOGY.

ſures,

ſures, muſt be exactly proportioned to our acquaintance with the means either of communicating or enjoying them. The works of creation are the great ſtorehouſe, where theſe means are to be ſought. And an inquiſitive attention to every ſurrounding object is eſſential to the poet, and highly uſeful to the lover of poetry. He, who extends his reſearches beyond the ſurface of things, will find that the treaſures of nature are inexhauſtible. For it is literally, no leſs than metaphorically true, that

> - - - - Many a gem, of pureſt ray ſerene,
> The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear,
> Full many a flower is born to bluſh unſeen,
> And waſte its ſweetneſs on the deſart air. *

Yet few have been the labourers in this rich harveſt of ſcience, ſince the days of Theocritus; and the paſtoral deſcriptions and images of that ancient Sicilian bard, have been uſed like hereditary

* Gray's Elegy.

property,

property, by all ſucceeding poets. In the ruder ages of the world, the modes of life were peculiarly favourable to the obſervation of nature. Rural ſcenery was continually before the eyes; and the culture of land, or the care of ſheep and cattle, conſtituted the occupation of the greateſt perſonages. This furniſhed a rich ſupply of original materials, which muſt for ever be withheld from thoſe, who immure themſelves in cities, and contemplate only the operations of art. Writers, therefore, of this claſs, are humbly ſatisfied to be mere copyiſts of others; and adopt, without reſerve, the figures, alluſions, and repreſentations of their poetical predeceſſors. But ſcience, which is borrowed, is often miſunderſtood: And it is not in the power, even of genius itſelf, to obviate the miſtakes which are committed through ignorance. Who, for inſtance, can notice the countenance of the Ox, without perceiving, that it diſplays meekneſs, patience, and the

moſt inoffenſive diſpoſition;* and that the eyes of this animal are of no unuſual dimenſion? Yet, in many verſions of Homer, that divine poet, ſo converſant with zoology, is made to ſtile the artful, proud, and paſſionate queen of the gods "Ox-eyed Juno." This miſtake of the tranſlators has evidently ariſen, from the want of attention to nature. And M. Dacier has ſhewn, that the particle βο is only an augmentative, ſignifying *(valde)* large-eyed; and that it has no direct relation to the ox. The error, which Dr. Young has fallen into, in his paraphraſe on Job, is more pardonable; becauſe an Engliſh poet, who has never ſeen the CROCODILE, might be ignorant that his eyes are remarkably ſmall. This animal is ſuppoſed to be the Leviathan, deſcribed in the 41ſt chapter of that book. And, if the explanation be true,

* Thomſon thus deſcribes the ox:

---------- And the plain ox,
That honeſt, harmleſs, guileleſs animal,

the

the following paſſage muſt have a reference to the brightneſs, and not to the magnitude, of his organs of ſight, as my friend Mr. Aikin has judiciouſly remarked.* *By his neezings a light doth ſhine; and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.* Dr. Young, by a miſconception of the original, has rendered this ſtrong figure ſtill more hyperbolical.

"Large is his front; and when his burniſh'd eyes
"Lift their *broad* lids, the morning ſeems to riſe."

In a former eſſay I have remarked, concerning the mimetic powers of poetry, that a ſingle word will ſometimes produce a repreſentation more pictureſque, than the pencil of Pouſſin, or of Salvator Roſa, ever exhibited. And the obſervation was exemplified by this line of Mr. Gray;

"Now fades the glimmering landſcape on the ſight,"

* See his elegant and ingenious Eſſay, on the Application of Natural Hiſtory to Poetry.

in which the accuracy and force of the epithet *glimmering* will be felt by any one, who has viewed, with attention, an extenſive proſpect, about an hour after ſun-ſet.* But a gentleman of this county, who has inſerted the foregoing line in a very elegant little poem, by an unfortunate tranſpoſition, has entirely deſtroyed its beauty, truth, and energy.

"Now fades the landſcape on the *glimmering ſight*."

Many original writers, of the moſt diſtinguiſhed reputation, have deviated widely from nature, by adopting facts and opinions without examination, or on inſufficient authority. Thus the poet Lucretius, who flouriſhed about fifty years before the Chriſtian æra, has ſanctioned the vulgar error, that, in the JAUNDICE, objects are painted on the retina, of the ſame colour with that, which tinges the external coat of the

* Eſſay on the Advantages of a Taſte for Nature and the Fine Arts.

eye;

eye; and has given a theory of it in conformity to the philoſophy of the Epicurean ſchool.

Lurida præterea fiunt quæcunque tuentur
Arquati, quia luroris de corpore eorum
Semina multa fluunt, ſimulacris obvia rerum;
Multaque ſunt oculis in eorum denique miſta,
Quæ contage ſua palloribus omnia pingunt. *

Beſides, whatever jaundic'd eyes do view,
Look pale, as well as thoſe, and yellow too,
For lurid parts fly off, with nimble wings,
And meet the diſtant coming forms of things:
And others lurk within the eyes, and ſeize,
And ſtain, with pale, the entering images. †

Mr. Pope has authoriſed the ſame obſervation, in his Eſſay on Criticiſm.

" All ſeems infected, that th' infected ſpy,
" As all looks yellow to the jaundic'd eye."

And the like miſtaken alluſion is more than once repeated in an admirable poem, lately publiſhed by Mr. Hayley.

* Lucretius, Lib. IV. line 333.

† Creech's Tranſ. of Lucret. Book IV. line 344.

" The bards of Britain, with unjaundic'd eyes,
" Will glory to behold ſuch rivals riſe.*

" On faireſt names, from every blemiſh free;
" Save what the jaundic'd eyes of party ſee."

I am inclined to believe there is no ſufficient foundation for this opinion. Galen indeed ſpeaks of yellow viſion, as common to icteric patients; and Sextus Empyricus has delivered the ſame account: But their relation is neither confirmed by experience, nor conſonant to reaſon. In the worſt caſes of the jaundice, now known, this ſymptom has no exiſtence; and I do not find it noticed in the records of Aretæus, Celſus, or Hippocrates.

The ſuppoſition, that the fertiliſing quality of SNOW ariſes from nitrous ſalts, which it is ſuppoſed to acquire in the act of freezing, is void of foundation;

* On Epic Poetry, Epiſt. IV.

becauſe

becauſe the moſt accurate experiments have demonſtrated, that it contains no nitre, and only a ſmall portion of calcareous earth. Falſe philoſophy, ſays an eminent chemiſt,* firſt gave riſe to this idea, and poetry has contributed to diffuſe the error. Thus Mr. Philips;

--------- O may'ſt thou often ſee
Thy furrows whiten'd by the woolly rain,
Nutritious; ſecret nitre lurks within
The porous wet; quickening the languid glebe.

But the following lines, of Mr. Thomſon, do not appear to me to be liable to the ſame objection. For the term *ſalts*, with the annexed epithet *little*, may be applied, without much poetical licence, to the cryſtals of water, formed by freezing.

What art thou, froſt?
Is not thy potent energy unſeen,
Myriads of *little ſalts*, or hook'd, or ſhap'd
Like double wedges, and diffus'd immenſe
Thro' water, earth and ether?

* Dr. Watſon, now Biſhop of Landaff, in his Chemical Eſſays.

The operation of froſt is here aſcribed to its mechanical powers. For, by binding the ſurface of the earth, it arreſts the exhalations, as they aſcend from the parts below; and thus retains a nutritious *pabulum*, to be applied, at the proper ſeaſon, to the roots of plants. But it chiefly meliorates the ſoil, by pulveriſing the particles which compoſe it, and fitting them for the abſorption of the vernal dews and rains.

Whenever PHILOSOPHY is introduced into poetry, truth, for the moſt part, is eſſential to its power of giving pleaſure. And our great epic writer ſeems to deſcend, ſometimes, from the majeſty of his work, by mixing, with modern diſcoveries, the groundleſs opinions of the ancients. Thus, when Raphael addreſſes Adam, concerning the great ſyſtem of nature, he ſays,

---------- Other ſuns, perhaps,
With their attendant moons, thou wilt deſcry,
Communicating *male* and *female* light. *

* Milton's Paradiſe Loſt, Book VIII. line 148.

The

The idea of *male* light being communicated by the *ſun*, and *female* light by the *moon*, probably originated, in the mind of Milton, from his intimate acquaintance with the writings of Pliny; who mentions, as a tradition, "that "the ſun is a maſculine ſtar, drying all "things, but that the moon is a ſoft and "feminine ſtar, of diſſolving power: "And that thus the balance of nature "is preſerved; ſome of the ſtars binding "the elements; and others looſening "them." *.

The HARMONY of the SPHERES, or muſical revolution of the heavenly bodies in their ſeveral orbits, was firſt taught by the Pythagoreans; who ſeem to have

* *Solis ardore ſiccatur liquor; et hoc eſſe maſculum ſidus accepimus, torrens cuncta ſorbenſque.---E contrario ferunt lunam femineum ac molle ſidus, atque nocturnum ſolvere humorem.---Ita penſari naturæ vices, ſemperque ſufficere, aliis ſiderum elementa cogentibus, aliis vero fundentibus.* Hiſt. Nat. Lib. II. Cap. 100. See alſo the notes to Newton's Edit. of Par. Loſt.

derived

derived this fanciful doctrine from analogy. For it was obſerved, by theſe philoſophers, that a muſical chord produces the ſame note, as one double in length, when the force is quadruple with which the latter is ſtretched: Hence they ſuppoſed that the gravity of a planet is quadruple the gravity of a planet, at a double diſtance. And as any muſical chord may become uniſon to a leſſer chord, of the ſame kind, if its tenſion be increaſed in the ſame proportion as the ſquare of its length is greater; ſo the gravity of a planet may become equal to the gravity of another planet, nearer to the ſun, provided it be increaſed in proportion as the ſquare of its diſtance from the ſun is greater. If, therefore, muſical chords be extended from the ſun to each planet, to bring them into uniſon, it would be requiſite, to increaſe or diminiſh their tenſions, in the ſame proportions, as would be ſufficient to render

the

the gravity of the planets equal.* This notion of the Pythagoreans is ſo pleaſing to the imagination, that it is not ſurpriſing the poets have adopted it. And Milton has given ſuch a view of it, as wants nothing but philoſophical truth to render it delightful.

> Myſtical dance, which yonder ſtarry ſphere
> Of planets, and of fix'd, in all her wheels
> Reſembles neareſt; mazes intricate,
> Eccentric, intervolv'd, yet regular,
> Then moſt, when moſt irregular they ſeem;
> And in their motions harmony divine
> So ſmooths her charming tones, that GOD's own ear
> Liſtens delighted.†

Mr. Pope has not only ſuppoſed the actual exiſtence of this heavenly harmony, but that it is poſſible the human ear might have been ſo conſtituted, as to have been ſenſible of it.

* Vid. Plin. Lib. II. Cap. 22. Macrob. Lib. II. Cap. 1. See alſo, Maclaurin's account of Sir Iſaac Newton's Philoſophical Diſcoveries, page 34.

† Paradiſe Loſt, Book V. line 620.

If Nature thunder'd in his opening ears,
And ſtunn'd him with the muſic of the ſpheres;
How would he wiſh that heav'n had left him ſtill,
The whiſp'ring zephyr, and the purling rill? *

Thoſe, who are in poſſeſſion of the firſt or ſecond edition of Thomſon's Seaſons, will find a groſs geographical miſtake, in the hymn which is annexed to them. Towards the cloſe of this beautiful poem, the author expreſſes his pious confidence in the univerſal wiſdom, and impartial benevolence of the Deity; and aſſerts, that the ſame regular ſeaſons, which he had deſcribed with ſuch fervour of delight in the preceding work, are equally experienced in every part of the globe.

- - - - - - God is ever preſent, ever felt,
In the void waſte, as in the city full;
Roll the *ſame kindred ſeaſons* round the world,
In all *apparent*, wiſe and good in all.

* Eſſay on Man, Ep. I. ver, 201.

The

The two laſt lines are omitted, in the ſubſequent editions of this poem.

The SYSTEM of PHILOSOPHY, which is now received, independent of its ſuperiority in point of truth, infinitely exceeds in extent, elevation, and grandeur, that of the ancients. The poet, therefore, ſhould be well verſed in the ſcience of phyſics, not only becauſe he can ſeldom deviate from it,* without injury to his

* In the following lines, the thought becomes low, by being unphiloſophical.

---------- O thieviſh night,
Why ſhould'ſt thou, but for ſome felonious end,
In thy *dark lanthorn* thus cloſe up the ſtars
That Nature hung in heaven, and filled their *lamps*
With everlaſting *oil*.
Milton's Comus.

The ſentiment is more brilliant, in a ſubſequent paſſage of this poem, but not more ſolid. And it is rendered abſurd by the leaſt reflection, on the impoſſibility of ſinking the vaſt orbs of the ſun and moon, in the ocean; or, as it is here improperly ſtiled, the *flat ſea*.

Virtue could ſee to do what virtue would,
By her own radiant light; though ſun and moon
Were in the *flat ſea* ſunk.
Id.

com-

compoſitions, but becauſe theſe may derive from it ſublimity, embelliſhment, or grace. Aſtronomy, in particular, furniſhes ſuch magnificent ideas, and boundleſs views, that imagination can hardly graſp, much leſs exalt or amplify them. "The objects which we commonly call "great," ſays an eminent writer, "vaniſh, "when we contemplate the vaſt body of "the earth; the terraqueous globe itſelf "is ſoon loſt in the ſolar ſyſtem. In "ſome parts it is ſeen as a diſtant ſtar; "in others it is unknown; or viſible "only at rare times, to vigilant obſervers. "The ſun itſelf dwindles into a ſtar; "Saturn's vaſt orbit, and the orbits of "all the comets, crowd into a point, "when viewed from numberleſs ſpaces "between the earth and the neareſt of "the fixed ſtars. Other ſuns kindle light "to illuminate other ſyſtems, where our "ſun's rays are unperceived; but they "alſo are ſwallowed up in the vaſt ex-"panſe. Even all the ſyſtems of the

"ſtars,

"ſtars, that ſparkle in the cleareſt ſky,
"muſt poſſeſs a corner only of that ſpace,
"through which ſuch ſyſtems are diſ-
"perſed: Since more ſtars are diſcovered
"in one conſtellation, by the teleſcope,
"than the naked eye perceives in the
"whole heavens. After we have riſen
"ſo high, and left all definite meaſures
"far behind us, we find ourſelves no
"nearer to a term or limit; for all this
"is nothing to what may be diſplayed
"in the infinite expanſe, beyond the re-
"moteſt ſtars that have hitherto been diſ-
"covered."* This deſcription, though delivered in the chaſte language of a mathematician, is, in ſentiment, ſo truly ſublime, that it wants nothing but numbers to conſtitute it poetry. And, in the following lines, it appears with all the charms of grace and harmony.

---------- Seiz'd in thought,
On Fancy's wild and roving wing I ſail
From the green borders of the peopled earth,

* Maclaurin's View of Sir Iſaac Newton's Diſcoveries, p. 16.

And

And the pale moon, her duteous, fair attendant;
From ſolitary Mars; from the vaſt orb
Of Jupiter, whoſe huge gigantic bulk
Dances in ether, like the lighteſt leaf;
To the dim verge, the ſuburbs of the ſyſtem,
Where cheerleſs Saturn 'midſt his wat'ry moons
Girt with a lucid zone, majeſtic ſits
In gloomy grandeur, like an exil'd queen
Amongſt her weeping handmaids: fearleſs thence
I launch into the trackleſs deeps of ſpace,
Where burning round ten thouſand ſuns appear,
Of elder beam; which aſk no leave to ſhine
Of our terreſtrial ſtar, nor borrow light
From the proud regent of our ſcanty day;
Sons of the morning, firſt-born of creation,
And only leſs than Him who marks their track,
And guides their fiery wheels. Here muſt I ſtop?
Or is there aught beyond? What hand, unſeen,
Impels me onward, through the glowing orbs
Of habitable nature; far remote,
To the dread confines of eternal night,
To ſolitudes of vaſt unpeopled ſpace,
The deſarts of creation, wide and wild;
Where embryo ſyſtems, and unkindled ſuns
Sleep in the womb of chaos! Fancy droops,
And thought, aſtoniſh'd, ſtops her bold career!*

* Mrs. Barbauld's Evening Meditation.

Homer,

Homer, whoſe knowledge of the magnitude and diſtances of the heavenly bodies, muſt have been very confined, never diſplays a more glowing imagination, than when he introduces them to our notice. And no one can view his animated picture of a moonlight and ſtarry night, without feeling himſelf tranſported to the ſcene, which it exhibits.

As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heaven's clear azure ſpreads her ſacred light;
When not a breath diſturbs the deep ſerene,
And not a cloud o'ercaſts the ſolemn ſcene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And ſtars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure ſhed,
And tip with ſilver every mountain's head;
Then ſhine the vales, the rocks in proſpect riſe,
A flood of glory burſts from all the ſkies;
The conſcious ſwains, rejoicing in the ſight,
Eye the blue vault, and bleſs the uſeful light.*

* Pope's Homer's Iliad, Book VIII. line 687.

Mr. Pope has tranſlated this paſſage with ſingular felicity; and perhaps it may be the faſtidiouſneſs of criticiſm to remark, that a *refulgent moon* is not compatible with *vivid* planets, and *glowing ſtars*; becauſe theſe fainter lights are eclipſed by the ſplendour of that luminary. But, though Homer, probably, did not mean to introduce a full moon, as his commentator Euſtathius has obſerved, yet a judicious Poet has choſen to leave this bright orb out of the evening ſcenery, which ſhe has ſo admirably pourtrayed.

- - - - - - - - - - - - Nature's ſelf is huſh'd;
And but a ſcattered leaf, which ruſtles thro'
The thick-wove foliage; not a ſound is heard
To break the midnight air.
- - - - - - - - - - - - - 'Tis now the hour
When Contemplation, from her ſunleſs haunts,
Moves forward; and with radiant finger points
Where, one by one, the living eyes of heaven
Awake, quick kindling o'er the face of ether
One boundleſs blaze; ten thouſand trembling fires
And dancing luſtres, where th' unſteady eye,
Reſtleſs

Reſtleſs and dazzled, wanders unconfin'd
O'er all this field of glories. *

It may be amuſing to contraſt the foregoing deſcriptions of the night, with thoſe recorded by Mr. Macpherſon, in his tranſlation of the poems of Oſſian. Five bards, paſſing the night in the houſe of a Caledonian chief, went out ſeverally to make their obſervations; and returned with an extempore deſcription of the night, which, as appears from the poem, was in the month of October. I ſhall here recite part of the compoſition of the fourth bard, as it is moſt analogous to the paſſages, above quoted.

" Night is calm and fair; blue, ſtarry,
" ſettled is night. The winds, with the
" clouds, are gone. They ſink behind
" the hill. The moon is upon the moun-
" tain. Trees gliſter; ſtreams ſhine on
" the rock. Bright rolls the ſettled lake;
" bright the ſtream of the vale.

* Mrs. Barbauld's Even. Med.

"The breezes drive the blue miſt,
"ſlowly over the narrow vale. It riſes
"on the hill, and joins its head to hea-
"ven.—Night is ſettled, calm, blue,
"ſtarry, bright with the moon. Re-
"ceive me not, my friends; for lovely is
"the night."*

In ſouthern latitudes the HEAVENLY BODIES are far more reſplendent, than when viewed through the thick atmoſphere of Britain. It is ſaid, that, in Jamaica, the *milky way* is tranſcendently bright, and that the planet Venus appears like a little moon, glittering with ſo vivid a beam, as to render viſible the ſhadows of trees, buildings, and other objects.† The ſetting ſun, in that iſland, exhibits a ſpectacle peculiarly auguſt. His circumference being enlarged by the interpoſing vapours, and the refrac-

* Oſſian's Croma, p. 255, 4to Edition.

† Hiſt. of Jamaica, Book II. p. 371.

tion

tion of the rays of light retaining in view his glorious orb, he ſeems to reſt awhile, from his career, on the ſummit of the mountains. Then he ſuddenly vaniſhes, leaving a train of ſplendour, which ſtreaks the clouds with the moſt lively and variegated tints, that the happieſt fancy can conceive.* In deſcribing ſuch a ſpectacle as this, the majeſty of the great luminary generally abſorbs the whole attention of the poet; and he takes little notice of the effect of the ſun's declination, on terreſtrial objects. Yet it is certain, that a landſcape, of ſmall extent, never appears more beautiful, than at the cloſe of a ſummer's day. Several cauſes then conſpire to give a richneſs to the ſcene, and no one ſo powerfully, as the heightened verdure of the herbage, ariſing, probably, from the combination of blue and yellow colours, reflected, at the ſame time, from the golden clouds, and azure ſky. Perhaps

* Hiſt. of Jamaica, Book II. p. 372.

the increaſed refraction, and ſoftened luſtre of the evening rays of light, may alſo contribute to this effect. For the herbage at that time appears, not only more green, but more copious too: Inſomuch that a paſture, which looks *bare* at noon, ſeems to abound in graſs at ſun-ſet. When thick black vapours hover about the weſtern ſun, and preſent only ſmall illumined edges, I have obſerved a circle of green, ſurrounding his diſc; an appearance, which I know not how to account for, but from the union, above deſcribed, of blue and yellow rays. This phenomenon I ſaw, in great perfection, as I was lately travelling over the mountains, which divide the counties of Lancaſter and York. The day was wet and ſtormy; and the war of elements, which I beheld, gave me ſome faint idea of what is experienced on the Alps and Andes; where the traveller views clouds at his feet, and coruſcations of lightening darting, on all ſides, below him.

him. Numberleſs meteors, which are unknown on the plain, preſent themſelves to his aſtoniſhed ſight; ſuch as circular rainbows, parhelia, the ſhadow of the mountain projected on the air, and his own image adorned with a kind of glory, round the head.* How tremendous is the account, which Don Ulloa has given, of his ſtation on the top of Cotopaxi, a mountain in Peru, more than three geographical miles above the level of the ſea! Here he was ſtationed, a conſiderable length of time, for the purpoſe of meaſuring a degree of the meridian; and the hardſhips which he ſuffered, from the intenſeneſs of the cold, and the ſtorms to which he was expoſed, almoſt exceed belief. "The ſky," ſays he, "was generally obſcured with thick fogs; "but, when theſe were diſperſed, and "the clouds moved, by their gravity, "nearer the ſurface of the earth, they

* Ulloa, Vol. I. Acad. Par. 1744. Prieſtley on Light and Colours, page 599, &c.

" ſurrounded the mountain to a vaſt diſ-
" tance, repreſenting the ſea, with our
" rock, like an iſland in the center of
" it. When this happened, we heard
" the horrid noiſes of the tempeſts,
" which diſcharged themſelves on Quito,
" and the neighbouring countries. We
" ſaw the lightenings iſſue from the
" clouds, and heard the thunders roll
" far beneath us. And, whilſt the lower
" regions were involved in tempeſts of
" thunder and rain, we enjoyed a de-
" lightful ſerenity. The wind was huſh-
" ed, the ſky clear, and the enlivening
" rays of the ſun moderated the ſeverity
" of the cold."* How would a ſcene,
like this, have been felt and deſcribed
by the Poet, of whom it is ſaid,

---------- When lightening fires
The arch of heaven, and thunders rock the ground;
When furious whirlwinds rend the howling air,
And ocean, groaning from his loweſt bed,

* Ulloa's Voyage, Vol. I. p. 231.

Heaves

Heaves his tempeſtuous billows to the ſky:
Amid the mighty uproar, while below
The nations tremble, Shakeſpear looks abroad
From ſome high cliff, ſuperior, and enjoys
The elemental war.*

The awful and gloomy grandeur of the mountainous ſcenery of Peru is, perhaps, leſs favourable to the deſcriptive powers of the poet, than the proſpects which ſome of the Alpine countries of Europe afford. In the cultivated diſtricts of Switzerland, particularly, the views furniſh the happieſt combination of the ſublime and beautiful. And I ſhall give a ſhort abſtract of the obſervations made, by a late traveller, on the Mole, a mountain, which riſes near five thouſand feet above the lake of Geneva, and is ſituated about eighteen miles eaſtward of that city. "In my aſcent," ſays Sir George Shuckburgh, "I ſaw the ſun, riſing be-
"hind one of the neighbouring Alps,

* Akenſide's Pleaſures of Imagination, Book III. line 590.

"with

" with a moſt beautiful effect; and the
" ſhadow of the mountain, we were then
" upon, extended fifteen or twenty miles
" weſt. Before me, at ſome diſtance,
" was ſpread the plain, in which lay
" Geneva and the lake; behind me roſe
" the Dole, and the long chain of Mont
" Jura. A little to the left, and much
" nearer, lay Mont Saleve, which, from
" this height, appeared an inconſiderable
" hill. To the right and left, nothing
" but immenſe rocks, and pointed moun-
" tains, of every poſſible ſhape, form-
" ing tremendous precipices. In the
" vale beneath, ſeveral little hamlets,
" and the moſt beautiful paſturages,
" with the river Arve, winding and
" ſoftening the ſcene. From whence
" aroſe a thick evaporation, collecting
" itſelf into clouds, which, on the lake,
" that was quite covered with them,
" had the appearance of a ſea of cotton;
" the ſun's beams playing on the upper
" ſurface of them, with thoſe tints, which

" are

"are ſeen in a fine evening. To the "ſouth weſt, appeared the lake of An-"necy; behind us lay the Glacieres, "and, amongſt them, towering above "all the reſt, ſtood Mount Blanc. The "circumference of the horizon might "be about two hundred Engliſh miles; "and though not one of the moſt exten-"ſive, yet certainly one of the moſt "varied in the world."*

It is with a reluctance, ſimilar, perhaps, to what this philoſophical traveller experienced, when he deſcended from the Mole, that I quit the imaginary viſion of this enchanting ſcene. But it is neceſſary to remark, that, however ſtriking ſuch complex and ſublime repreſentations may be, they can only be introduced occaſionally by the poet; whoſe talents for deſcription ſhould be chiefly exerciſed in the judicious ſelection and pictureſque

* Philoſoph. Tranſact. 1777, p. 536.

diſplay

diſplay of ſmall groups, or individual objects. Like the magnet, he muſt draw forth what is valuable, even from the rudeſt materials; and nicely diſcriminate, in every ſurrounding object, thoſe attributes, which can be rendered ſubſervient to his art. We are informed, that Thomſon was wont to wander whole days and nights in the country: And, in ſuch ſequeſtered walks, he acquired, by the moſt minute attention, a knowledge of all the myſteries of nature. Theſe he has wrought into his Seaſons with the colouring of Titian, the wildneſs of Salvator Roſa, and the energy of Raphael.

Milton appears to have been no leſs familiar with nature, than Thomſon, and equally happy in his portraits of her moſt pleaſing forms. He catches every diſtinguiſhing feature; and gives to what he deſcribes, ſuch glowing tints of life and reality, that we have it, as it were,

in

in full view before our eyes. How perfect is the image, in the following lines!

- - - - - - - - - The ſwan, with *arched neck*
Between her *white wings mantling, proudly rows*
Her ſtate, with *oary feet*.*

Indeed the whole account of the creation, which the Archangel relates to Adam, is ſo engaging and pictureſque, that it would fully refute the criticiſm of a learned Italian, if the poem contained no other beauties of a ſimilar kind. "The poets beyond the Alps," ſays Abbè Winckelmann, "ſpeak *figuratively*, but "without *painting*. The ſtrange and "ſometimes terrifying figures, which "conſtitute almoſt all the grandeur of "Milton, are by no means the *objects* of "a *pencil*, but rather ſeem beyond the "reach of *painting*."† Surely the de-

* Paradiſe Loſt, Book VII. line 438.

† Hiſtoire des l'Arts chez les Anciens.

ſcription

ſcription of the ſwan, above recited, might be copied on the canvas, by any artiſt, of tolerable genius. As Milton derived his knowledge of this beautiful bird from actual obſervation, he has not fallen into the error of the ancient poets, who have, almoſt univerſally, aſcribed to it a muſical voice. Callimachus terms it "Apollo's tuneful ſongſter;" and Horace compliments Pindar with the epithet "*Dircæan ſwan.*"* Such improprieties clearly evince the importance of natural knowledge to the poet.

The polity of ROOKS is almoſt conſtituted with as much order and wiſdom, as that of ants, bees, and beavers; and their attachment to places contiguous

* *Multa Dircæum levat aura Cycnum*
Tendit Antoni, quoties in altos
Nubium tractus. Ode II. Lib. 4.

In the addreſs to Melpomene, he ſays,

O mutis quoque piſcibus
Donatura Cycni, ſi libeat, ſonum. Ode III.

to

to the dwellings of men, not only affords us frequent opportunities of obſerving them, but intereſts us, at the ſame time, in their well-being and preſervation. Theſe birds, therefore, furniſh the poet with various topics, for the diſplay of his art; and the following incident, by a little colouring, might be wrought into a pathetic picture. A large colony of rooks had ſubſiſted, many years, in a grove, on the banks of the river Irwell, near Mancheſter. One ſerene evening, I placed myſelf within the view of it, and marked, with attention, the various labours, paſtimes, and evolutions of this crowded ſociety. The idle members amuſed themſelves with chacing each other, through endleſs mazes; and, in their flight, they made the air reſound with an infinitude of diſcordant noiſes. In the midſt of theſe playful exertions, it unfortunately happened, that one rook, by a ſudden turn, ſtruck his beak againſt the wing of another. The ſufferer inſtantly

ſtantly fell into the river. A general cry of diſtreſs enſued. The birds hovered, with every expreſſion of anxiety, over their diſtreſſed companion. Animated by their ſympathy, and perhaps by the language of counſel, known to themſelves, he ſprung into the air, and by one ſtrong effort, reached the point of a rock, which projected into the water. The exultation became loud and univerſal; but, alas! it was ſoon changed into notes of lamentation. For the poor wounded bird, in attempting to fly towards his neſt, dropt again into the river, and was drowned, amidſt the moans of his whole fraternity.

The habitudes of the domeſtic breed of POULTRY cannot, poſſibly, eſcape obſervation: And every one muſt have noticed the fierce jealouſy of the cock,

Whoſe breaſt with ardour flames, as on he walks,
Graceful, and crows defiance.*

* Thomſon's Spring, line 772.

It

It ſhould ſeem that this jealouſy is not confined to his rivals, but may ſometimes extend to his beloved female: And that he is capable of being actuated by revenge, founded on ſome degree of reaſoning, concerning her conjugal infidelity. An incident, which lately happened, at the ſeat of Mr. B******, near Berwick, juſtifies this remark. "My mowers," ſays he, "cut a par-
"tridge on her neſt, and immediately
"brought the eggs (fourteen) to the
"houſe. I ordered them to be put un-
"der a very large beautiful hen, and her
"own to be taken away. They were
"hatched in two days, and the hen
"brought them up perfectly well till
"they were five or ſix weeks old. Du-
"ring that time they were conſtantly
"kept confined in an outhouſe, without
"having been ſeen by any of the other
"poultry. The door happened to be left
"open, and the cock got in. My houſe-

" keeper, hearing her hen in diſtreſs, " ran to her aſſiſtance, but did not arrive " in time to ſave her life. The cock, " finding her with the brood of par- " tridges, fell upon her with the utmoſt " fury, and put her to death. The " houſe-keeper found him tearing her " both with his beak and ſpurs, although " ſhe was then fluttering in the laſt " agony, and incapable of any reſiſtance. " The hen had been, formerly, the cock's " greateſt favourite."

A writer, of no inconſiderable merit,* has employed his muſe, on a ſubject highly intereſting to the Engliſh reader, in a didactic poem entitled the *Fleece*. In this work, whatever relates to the management of *ſheep*, and the manufacture of wool, is largely diſcuſſed; and the whole is adorned by the introduction of rural imagery, and amuſing digreſ-

* Mr. Dyer.

ſions.

ſions. But the performance might have been rendered much more entertaining, if it had comprehended a fuller account of the natural hiſtory of the ſheep; and had diſplayed a nicer attention to the peculiar and pleaſing character of that innocent animal, and of her ſportive offſpring. One fact ſhould not have been omitted, in ſuch a narrative; and I wonder it eſcaped Mr. Dyer's obſervation. I am informed, that, after the dam has been ſhorn, and turned into the fold to her lambs, they become eſtranged to her, and that a ſcene of reciprocal diſtreſs enſues; which a man, of lively imagination, and tender feelings, might render highly intereſting and pathetic. The poor ſheep, when undergoing the operation of waſhing, and alſo when ſtripped of her warm and graceful covering is, in both circumſtances a ſpectacle, of pity, and a proper object of poetical amplification. Had Mr. Sterne been the

author of the Fleece, he would perhaps have introduced the following little epiſode. "Dear Senſibility! thou ſome-
"times inſpireſt the rough peaſant, who
"traverſes the bleakeſt mountains.—He
"finds the lacerated lamb of another's
"flock. This moment I beheld him,
"leaning his head againſt his crook,
"with piteous inclination looking down
"upon it.—Oh! had I come one mo-
"ment ſooner!—It bleeds to death.—
"His gentle heart bleeds with it.—Peace
"to thee, generous ſwain! I ſee thou
"walkeſt off with anguiſh; but thy joys
"ſhall balance it. For happy is thy
"cottage;—and happy is the ſharer of
"it;—and happy are the lambs, which
"ſport about thee!"

Smoke, iſſuing from the chimney of a retired cottage, ſhaded with trees, is a pleaſing object. The waving line of beauty, in which it gradually aſcends, and

and the ſucceſſion of graceful forms, which it aſſumes, before it is loſt in the atmoſphere, adapts it to poetical deſcription or compariſon, as well as to the canvas of the painter. Mr. Dyer, in the poem above referred to, has thus repreſented its appearance, and aſſociated with it ideas of comfort and plenty, which tend to heighten the complacency of the beholder.

Yet your mild homeſteads, ever blooming ſmile
Among embracing woods, and waft on high
The breath of plenty, from the ruddy tops
Of chimneys, curling o'er the gloomy trees,
In airy, azure ringlets, to the ſky.*

The FLOATING MISTS, which are ſeen on the tops and ſides of hills, often put on a variety of agreeable ſhapes and colours. They conſtitute an intereſting part of the ſcenery of Oſſian's poems;

* Dyer's Fleece, Book I. line 509.

and are introduced, with peculiar propriety, as objects which, in a mountainous country, were continually within the view of his *dramatis perſonæ*. "The "miſt of Cromla curls upon the rock, "and ſhines to the beam of the weſt. "The ſoft miſt pours over the ſilent vale. "The green flowers are filled with dew. "The ſun returns in his ſtrength; and "the miſt is gone." Theſe beautiful forms ſuggeſt, to a devout mind, converſant with the writings of Milton, part of Adam's morning invocation.

Ye miſts and exhalations, that now riſe
From hill or ſteaming lake, duſky or grey,
Till the ſun paint your fleecy ſkirts with gold,
In honour to the world's great Author riſe,
Whether to deck with clouds th' uncoloured ſky,
Or wet the thirſty earth with falling ſhowers,
Riſing or falling, ſtill advance his praiſe.*

The expreſſion *ſteaming lake*, in the ſecond line, is uſed with the ſtricteſt philoſophical

* Milton, Book V.

trtuh

truth. Thomſon has applied the ſame epithet, with equal juſtneſs, to that inteſtine motion in the earth, by which Divine Providence

> Works in the ſecret deep, ſhoots *ſteaming* thence
> The fair profuſion, that o'erſpreads the ſpring.

For it appears, from ſome late experiments, that ſixteen hundred gallons of water riſe, by evaporation, from an acre of ground, within the ſpace of twelve hours, of a ſummer's day.*

An inattentive obſerver of nature would hardly remark the CURVILINEAR DIRECTION, in the motion of animals. Yet certain it is, that neither birds, fiſhes, inſects, quadrupeds, nor men, ever move long in a ſtraight line. The final cauſe of this ſeems to be, that eaſe may be alternately given to the muſcles, on the

* Watſon's Chemical Eſſays, Vol. III. p. 52.

right and on the left ſide of the body. When the muſcles of the right ſide are in a ſtate of vigorous exertion, the direction of the body will incline that way; and when they require relief, thoſe of the left ſide come into action, and produce an oppoſite effect. Whoever follows a draught horſe heavily laden, will perceive the truth of this obſervation. And it is not more apparent on the beaten highway, than in the ſheep-tracks on the heath, and in the paths, worn by the paſſage of cattle to their watering places. Hence it is a rule, in the art of gardening, that walks and pleaſure grounds ſhould be ſerpentine; as that form is moſt agreeable to nature, and therefore moſt conſonant to an elegant and improved taſte.

Milton makes frequent mention of the FLAMING SWORDS, borne by the angelic ſpirits, and particularly by the cherubims,

bims, who were ſtationed at the gate of Paradiſe.

And on the eaſt ſide of the garden place,
Where entrance up from Eden eaſieſt climbs,
Cherubic watch; and of a ſword, the flame
Wide waving, all approach far off to fright,
And guard all paſſage to the tree of life.*

If the Poet had been acquainted with the modern diſcoveries in electricity, he might perhaps have ſeized this occaſion of exerting his ſuperior talents for deſcription, by a more minute and pictorial diſplay of *the ſword of flame wide waving*. The reader, at leaſt, may aſſiſt his imagination to conceive a more lively idea of it, by the following beautiful experiment.

Make a torricellian *vacuum*, in a glaſs tube, about three feet long, and ſeal it

* Paradiſe Loſt, Book XI. line 120.

hermetically.

hermetically. Let one end of this tube be held in the hand, and the other applied to the electrical conductor; and immediately the whole tube will be illuminated, and when taken from the conductor, will continue luminous for a conſiderable time. If it be then drawn through the hand, the light will be uncommonly intenſe, from end to end, without the leaſt interruption. After this operation, which diſcharges it in a great meaſure, it will ſtill flaſh at intervals, though held only at one extremity, and quite ſtill. But if it be graſped by the other hand, at the ſame time, in a different place, ſtrong flaſhes of light will dart from one extremity to the other, and continue to do ſo twenty-four hours, or perhaps longer, without freſh excitation.*

* See Dr. Prieſtley's Hiſt. of Electricity, p. 540.

The

The foregoing experiment was made by Mr. Canton, to elucidate the nature of the Aurora Borealis, a phenomenon well ſuited to exerciſe the fancy of the poet. But ſtill more congenial to him are thoſe illuſive meteors, which ſometimes occur in northern climates; and which, literally, give "to airy nothing a local habitation and a name." "I was "never more ſurpriſed," ſays Crantz, in his Hiſtory of Greenland, "than on a "fine warm ſummer's day, to perceive "the iſlands, that lie four leagues weſt "of our ſhore, putting on a form quite "different from what they are known "to have. As I ſtood gazing upon them, "they appeared at firſt infinitely greater "than what they naturally are; and "ſeemed as if I viewed them through "a large magnifying glaſs. They were "thus not only made larger, but brought "nearer to me: I plainly deſcried every "ſtone upon the land, and all the furrows

"filled

" filled with ice. When this deception " had laſted for a while, the proſpect " ſeemed to break up, and a new ſcene " of wonder to preſent itſelf. The iſlands " ſeemed to travel to the ſhore, and " repreſented a wood, or a tall cut hedge. " The ſcene then ſhifted, and ſhewed " the appearance of all ſorts of curious " figures; as ſhips with ſails, ſtreamers, " and flags, antique elevated caſtles with " decayed turrets; and a thouſand forms, " for which fancy found a reſemblance " in nature. When the eye had been " ſatisfied with gazing, the whole group " ſeemed to riſe in air, and at length " vaniſh into nothing. At ſuch times, " the air is quite ſerene and clear; " but compreſt with ſubtle vapours; and " theſe, appearing between the eye and " the object, give it all that variety of " appearances, which glaſſes, of different " refrangibilities, would have done." *

* See Goldſmith's Hiſtory of the Earth, Vol. I.

However

However marvellous this narrative may appear to a phlegmatic reader, it will not ſeem incredible to the poet, whoſe fancy can form a ſtill brighter, and more gay creation, without the aid of aerial refractions or reflections. And if theſe fictions deviate not too far from veriſimilitude, they agreeably agitate the mind with the mixed emotions of ſurpriſe and delight. But, in delineations of nature, they have no legitimate place; and the judgment rejects, with diſguſt, whatever falſifies the truth of deſcription, by its obvious incongruity. Myrtle groves, perennial ſprings, unfading flowers, and odoriferous gales, the hackneyed Arcadian ſcenery, accord not with an Engliſh landſcape. And equally unſuitable, to the views of this country, are the ſpicy beauties, and pearly treaſures of the Eaſt. Yet Milton, in his Comus, thus addreſſes the goddeſs of the Severn;

May thy billows roll aſhore,
The beryl, and the golden ore!
May thy lofty head be crown'd
With many a tower, and terrace round;
And here and there, thy banks upon,
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.

But the poet is not, upon all occaſions, to be confined within the preciſe boundaries of truth. What writer, of lively fancy, in deſcribing a morning walk on the banks of Keſwick, would not embelliſh the beauty of the ſcene by introducing the MELODY of BIRDS; and thus add the charms of muſic to all the enchantments of viſion. Yet, I believe, there is not a feathered ſongſter to be found in thoſe delightful vales; probably, owing to the terror inſpired by the birds of prey, which abound on the mountains that ſurround them. At Grange, about four miles from the lake, there is an eagle's eyrie. The neſt is circular, compoſed of twigs twiſted together;

gether; and is more than a yard in diameter. The eagles, which inhabit it, are of the ſpecies called the erne, or the vulture Albicilla, of Linnæus. And they are ſaid to commit great deſtruction amongſt the hares, partridges, grouſe, and even lambs of that diſtrict.*

I cannot cloſe this Eſſay, without making an apology for the freedom of my ſtrictures on poetical demerit. And I feel a peculiar diffidence with reſpect to my animadverſions on a poet, who is juſtly the boaſt and glory of Britain. To pluck a leaf from the brow of Milton, may be deemed a ſacrilegious attempt to injure the laurels of our country: But it ſhould be recollected, that error is moſt dangerous, when dignified by high example; and that it is no diſparagement to genius, however exalted,

* See Mr. Gray's Tour to the Lakes.

to

to aſcribe to it, ſome portion of that imperfection, which is the common allotment of humanity.

A TRIBUTE

A

TRIBUTE

TO THE MEMORY OF

CHARLES DE POLIER, Esq;

ADDRESSED TO THE

LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

OF MANCHESTER.

OCTOBER 30th, 1782.

AT a meeting of the LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY *of* MANCHESTER, *the following reſolution paſſed unanimouſly.*

"*The Members of the* LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY *lamenting, with heartfelt concern, the death of their late much honoured brother,* CHARLES DE POLIER, *Eſq; unanimouſly reſolve, that* DR. PERCIVAL *be requeſted to draw up a grateful and reſpectful Tribute to his Memory; to be inſerted in the journals of the Society, with a view to record his diſtinguiſhed merit, and to prolong the influence of his bright example.*"

NOVEMBER 13th, 1782.

At a meeting of the LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, *it was reſolved unanimouſly,* "*That the Thanks of the Society be returned to* DR. PERCIVAL, *for his Tribute to the Memory of* CHARLES DE POLIER, *Eſq; and that he be deſired to print the ſame.*"

A

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY

OF

CHARLES DE POLIER, Esq;

ADDRESSED TO THE

LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF MANCHESTER.

THE contemplation of moral and intellectual excellence affords the moſt pleaſing and inſtructive exerciſe, to a well conſtituted mind. By exalting our ideas of the human character, it expands and heightens the principle of benevolence; and at the ſame time is favourable to piety, by raiſing our views to the ſupreme Author of all that is fair and good in man. The wiſe and the virtuous have ever dwelt, with delight, on the meritorious talents and diſpoſitions of their fellow-creatures: And an

amiable philoſopher drew, from this ſource, ſuch ſweet conſolations, under the toils and diſtreſſes of life, that he warmly recommends the practice to our imitation. "*When you would recreate* "*yourſelf,*" ſays M. Antoninus, "*reflect* "*on the laudable qualities of your acquaint-* "*ance: On the magnanimity of one, the* "*modeſty of another, or the liberality of a* "*third.*"* Generous meditation! which every one, preſent, may indulge; and, by indulging, aſſimilate, to his own nature, the various perfections of others; transfuſing, as it were, into his breaſt, the virtues which he contemplates.

But can we engage ourſelves in ſuch an exerciſe, without the moſt lively recollection of our late honoured and beloved colleague? His image preſents itſelf before us; and we inſtantly recogniſe the agreeableneſs of his form, the animation of his countenance, the vigour of

* M. Antonin. Lib. VI.

his

his underſtanding, and the goodneſs of his heart. How graceful was his addreſs; how ſprightly, entertaining, and intelligent his converſation! What rich ſtores of knowledge did he diſplay; what facility in the uſe, what judgment in the application of them! Few have been the ſubjects of diſcuſſion in this Society, which his obſervations have not enlightened: And what he could not himſelf elucidate, he has enabled others to do, by the pertinency of his queries, and the ſagacity of his conjectures. So quick was his penetration; ſo enlarged his comprehenſion; ſo exact the arrangement of his intellectual treaſures! Learning, with ſome, is the parent of mental obſcurity; and the multiplicity of ideas, which have been acquired by ſevere ſtudy, ſerve only to produce perplexity and confuſion. But Mr. de Polier's thoughts were always ready at command. And he engaged, with perſpicuity, on every topic of diſcourſe; becauſe he ſaw,

at one view, all its relations and analogies to thoſe branches of knowledge, with which he was already acquainted. With ſuch felicity of genius, he was continually making large acceſſions to his ſtock of ſcience, without laborious reſearches, or ſecluſion from the ſocial enjoyments of life.

Of his abilities as a writer, he furniſhed us with a ſtriking proof, in the Diſſertation he delivered, laſt winter;* which is equally diſtinguiſhed by the juſtneſs of its ſentiments, and the purity of its diction; and fully diſplays his perfect attainment, both of the idiom and embelliſhments of the Engliſh language.

But Mr. de Polier had merits, more eſtimable than thoſe, which he derived from the vivacity of his fancy, the elegance of his taſte, or the powers of his

* On the pleaſure which the mind receives, from the *exerciſe* of its faculties, and particularly that of *taſte*.

under-

underſtanding. And his friends will cordially unite with me in teſtifying, that, if honoured for his *intellectual*, he was beloved for his *moral* endowments. His heart was open to every generous ſympathy; and the ſenſibility of his nature ſo enlivened all his perceptions, that the ordinary duties of ſocial intercourſe were performed, by him, with a warmth, almoſt equal to that of friendſhip. Nor was this the artificial deportment of unmeaning courteſy; but the generous effuſion of a heart, which felt for all mankind. In ſuch *philanthropy*, politeneſs has its true foundation: And of this joint grace of nature and education, "which aids and ſtrengthens Virtue "where it meets her, and imitates her "actions, where ſhe is not," our lamented brother was a bright example. So engaging were his manners, and at the ſame time ſo ſincere his diſpoſition, that we may apply to him, with *honour*, what Cicero meant as a *reproach*; that

he was qualified, *cum triſtibus ſevére, cum remiſſis jucunde, cum ſenibus graviter, cum juventute comiter vivere.* Theſe powers of pleaſing flowed from no ſervile compliances, nor ever led him into criminal indulgences. As a companion, he was convivial without intemperance, and gay without levity or licentiouſneſs. His converſation was ſprightly and unreſerved; but, in the moſt unguarded hours of mirth, exempt from all indecency and profaneneſs. And the ſallies of his wit and pleaſantry were ſo ſeaſoned with good humour, that they gave delight, unmixed with pain, even to thoſe who were the objects of them. If the coarſer pleaſures of the bottle be baniſhed from our tables; or if rational converſation, and delicacy of behaviour, with the ſweet ſociety of the ſofter ſex, be now ſubſtituted in their room, this happy revolution has been rendered more complete by the influence of Mr. de Polier.

But

But though URBANITY, according to the moſt liberal interpretation of that term, was the *characteriſtic* of our excellent colleague, he poſſeſſed other endowments, of more intrinſic value. And I could enlarge, with pleaſure, on his nice ſenſe of rectitude, his inviolable integrity, and ſacred regard to truth. Theſe moral virtues were, in him, founded on no fictitious principle of *honour*, but reſulted from the conſtitution of his mind; and were ſtrengthened by habit, regulated by reaſon, and ſanctioned by religion. For, notwithſtanding, the veil which he choſe to caſt over his *piety*, it was manifeſt to his intimate friends; and may be recollected by others, who have marked the ſeriouſneſs, with which he diſcourſed, on every ſubject relative to the being and attributes of GOD. Defective indeed muſt be the character of that man, who can diſcern and acknowledge, without venerating the divine perfections; and partake of the

the bounties of nature, yet feel no emotions of gratitude towards its benevolent Author. "*A little philoſophy*," ſays lord Verulam, "*may incline the mind to atheiſm*; "*but depth in philoſophy will bring it about* "*again to religion.*"*

I have thus attempted to draw a rude ſketch of the features, of our late honoured friend. A fuller delineation might furniſh a more pleaſing picture to ſtrangers; but, to the members of this ſociety, a few outlines will ſuffice to revive the image of the beloved original. This image, I truſt, will be long and forcibly impreſſed on our minds; and that every one, here preſent, may adopt the language of Tacitus, on a ſimilar occaſion. "*Quicquid ex Agricola amavimus, quicquid*

* The noble author ſubjoins a juſt reaſon, for this obſervation. "For while the mind of man," ſays he, "looketh upon "*ſecond cauſes* ſcattered, it may ſometimes reſt in them, and "go no farther: But when it beholdeth the chain of them "linked together, it muſt needs fly to Providence and Deity."
BACON's Eſſay on Atheiſm.

"*mirati*

" *mirati ſumus, manet, manſurumque eſt in animis hominum.*" " Whatever in " Agricola was the object of our love " and of our admiration, remains, and " will remain, in the hearts of all who " knew him."

Having taken a ſhort view of the character of Mr. de Polier, curioſity and attachment concur in prompting us, to extend the retroſpect; and we become ſolicitous to know ſomething of his connections and education; and to trace the leading events of a life, in the concluſion of which we have been ſo deeply intereſted. But our friend was no egotiſt; and the zeal with which he entered into the concerns of others, precluded the detail of his own. I muſt content myſelf, therefore, with preſenting to the ſociety, the following brief memoirs.

Charles de Polier Bottens was the ſon of the Reverend —— de Polier Bottens, Dean

Dean of the Cathedral Church of Lauſanne, Preſident of the Synod of the Pais de Vaud, Member of the Society of Arts and Sciences at Manheim, and citizen of Geneva. He was born at Lauſanne, in the year 1753; and received the firſt part of his education, in the public ſchools of that city. As ſoon as he had acquired a ſufficient knowledge of the claſſics, he was ſent to an academy near Caſſel, in Germany; from whence, after a reſidence of two years, he was removed to the univerſity of Gottingen. In this celebrated ſeat of learning, he paſſed three years; and being then inclined to a military life, he obtained a lieutenant's commiſſion in the Swiſs regiment of D'Erlact, in the French ſervice. But he ſoon reſigned his commiſſion, and returned to Lauſanne; where he had a command given him, in one of the Provincial regiments of dragoons. In this ſituation, his connection commenced with the Earl of Tyrone; who offered him the tuition of his eldeſt ſon,

Lord

Lord le Poer, on terms equally honourable and advantageous. But before the engagement was completed, propoſals were made to him by the duke of Saxe Gotha, to become governor to the hereditary prince, with an annuity, for life, of twelve hundred rixdollars; an apartment at court; and the poſt of chamberlain, or rank of colonel. Theſe propoſals, however, he declined in favour of lord Tyrone. And he executed the important truſt, aſſigned to him, with ſuch judgment, tenderneſs, and fidelity, as induced that reſpectable nobleman to commit three of his children to his ſole direction. Theſe amiable youths he brought to England, in the ſummer of 1779; and ſettled them at the ſchool of a clergyman in Mancheſter, who is eminently diſtinguiſhed by his virtues as a man, and abilities as a teacher.

At this period, our firſt acquaintance with Mr. de Polier was formed. By the

the laws of hoſpitality, he was entitled to our attention, as a ſtranger. But his perſonal accompliſhments, and the charms of his converſation, ſoon ſuperſeded the ordinary claims of cuſtom, and converted formal civility into eſteem and friendſhip. He became our companion in pleaſure; our aſſiſtant in ſtudy; our counſellor in difficulty; and our ſolace in diſtreſs. Amuſement acquired a dignity and zeſt, by his participation; and he ſoftened the auſterity of philoſophy, whenever he joined in the purſuit. The inſtitution, which now celebrates his memory, owes to him much of its popularity and ſucceſs; and, ſo long as it ſubſiſts, his name will be revered, as one of its founders and moſt ſhining ornaments.

About the middle of laſt winter he was attacked by a complaint, which at firſt gave no diſturbance to the vital functions. But being aggravated by the fatigues

fatigues of a long journey to Holyhead, and of a voyage from thence to Dublin, at a time when he laboured under the *Influenza*, his malady rapidly increaſed after his arrival in Ireland; and put a final period to his valuable life on the 18th of October 1782.* The vigour of his faculties, and the warmth of his affections, continued even to the hour of his diſſolution. And the amiableneſs of his behaviour, in the cloſing ſcene of trial and ſuffering through which he paſſed, gave ſuch completion to his character, that we may apply to him, what the Poet has ſaid of Mr. Addiſon;

--- He taught us how to live; and, oh! too high
The price of knowledge, taught us how to die.†

On this affecting event, I cannot expreſs your feelings and my own, in terms ſo forcible as thoſe of the animated hiſ-

* At CURRAGHMORE, near WATERFORD, the ſeat of the Earl of Tyrone.

† Tickell's Poem on the Death of Addiſon.

torian,

torian, whom I have before quoted. *Si quis piorum manibus locus; ſi, ut ſapientibus placet, non cum corpore exſtinguuntur magnæ animæ; placide quieſcas, noſque ab infirmo deſiderio, ad contemplationem virtutum tuarum voces, quas neque lugeri, neque plangi fas eſt! Admiratione te potius temporalibus laudibus, et ſi natura ſuppeditet, militum decoramus!** "If there be any "habitation for the ſhades of the virtu- "ous; if, as philoſophers ſuppoſe, ex- "alted ſouls do not periſh with the body; "may you repoſe in peace, and recall "us from vain regret, to the contem- "plation of your virtues, which allow "no place for mourning or complaint! "Let us adorn your memory, rather, "by a fixed admiration, and, if our "natures will permit, by an imitation "of your excellent qualities, than by "temporary eulogies!" †

* Tacit. Vit. Agricolæ.

† See Mr. Aikin's Tranſlation of the Life of Agricola.

A N

A P P E N D I X

TO THE

SOCRATIC DISCOURSE;

CONTAINING

SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS,

AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

As the Socratic mode of diſcuſſion admits not of interruption by notes, the author has choſen to inſert, in this place, ſuch additional REMARKS *and* ILLUSTRATIONS, *concerning the ſubject matter of the diſcourſe on* TRUTH, *as further reading or reflection have ſuggeſted to his mind.*

AN

APPENDIX

TO THE

SOCRATIC DISCOURSE;

CONTAINING

SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS,

AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

I. TRUE AND FALSE HONOUR.*

THERE is a principle of HONOUR, which ſeems to be, in ſome meaſure, diſtinct from that of virtue, and originates from the aſſociation of certain ideas of propriety, or pride, with rectitude of conduct. Amongſt the ancient

* See page 11.

Greeks and Romans, Virtue and Honour were deified; and a joint altar was conſecrated to them at Rome. But afterwards each of them had ſeparate temples; ſo connected, however, that no one could enter the temple of honour, without paſſing through that of virtue.

The genuine principle of honour, in its full extent, may be defined, a quick perception, and lively feeling of moral obligation, particularly with reſpect to probity and truth, in conjunction with an acute ſenſibility to ſhame, reproach, or infamy. But in different characters, theſe two conſtituent parts of the principle are found to exiſt in proportions ſo widely diverſified, as, ſometimes, to appear almoſt ſingle and detached. The former always *aids and ſtrengthens virtue*; the latter may, occaſionally, *imitate her actions*,* when faſhion happily countenances,

* Honour's a ſacred tie, the law of kings,
The noble mind's diſtinguiſhing perfection,

That

nances, or high example prompts to rectitude. But being connected, for the moſt part, with a jealous pride, and capricious irritability, it will be more ſhocked with the *imputation*, than with the *commiſſion* of what is wrong. And thus it will conſtitute that ſpurious honour, which, by a perverſion of the laws of aſſociation, *puts evil for good, and good for evil*; and, under the ſanction of a name, perpetrates crimes without remorſe, and even without ignominy. To this empirical morality *duelling* owes its riſe, which, with a fatal confidence, pretends to cure the indecorums of ſocial intercourſe, whilſt it deſtroys the lives of individuals, ſubverts the peace of families, and violates the moſt ſacred laws of the community. It is aſtoniſhing that a practice, which originated in the dark ages of ignorance,

> That aids and ſtrengthens Virtue where it meets her,
> And imitates her actions where ſhe is not:
> It ought not to be ſported with.
>
> ADDISON's Cato.

ſuperſtition, and diſorder, ſhould be continued in this enlightened period, though condemned by the polity of every ſtate, and utterly repugnant to the ſpirit, and precepts of Chriſtianity. The ancient Germans, Danes, and Franks, were uſed to decide criminal queſtions of fact, in the laſt reſort, by combat. But this method of trial, about the cloſe of the fifth century, was reſtrained to the following conditions. 1. That the crime, for which it was inſtituted, ſhould be capital. 2. That it ſhould be certain, that the crime had been perpetrated. 3. That the accuſed, by common fame, ſhould be ſuppoſed guilty. 4. That the matter ſhould not be capable of proof by witneſſes. A cuſtom, thus regulated, appears wiſe and equitable, in compariſon with modern duelling, which has ſeldom any object, but the redreſs of fantaſtic wrongs, or the diſplay of reſentment, that often ſubſides before its execution. Is there a man of probity and humanity,

and

and many of this character, I am perſuaded, have been ſeduced by the illuſions of falſe honour, who, if not prohibited by law, would think himſelf authoriſed to call forth his antagoniſt, place him as a mark, and appoint a ruffian to fire a piſtol at him, becauſe, in the heat of argument, or in the unguarded hours of convivial mirth, he has committed ſome trifling offence, or verbal incivility? And is it not adding the moſt egregious folly to injuſtice, to undertake himſelf this opprobrious office, at the hazard of his own life, and to the ruin, perhaps, of his deareſt connections? For, I preſume, it now forms no part of the creed of the duelliſt, that Divine Providence will interpoſe, on ſuch occaſions, to preſerve the injured, and to puniſh the aggreſſor.

The military ſpirit, which a long war has revived amongſt the inhabitants of this country, and which the armed aſſo-

ciations, eſtabliſhed in different places, cannot fail to foſter and ſupport, may, perhaps, contribute to multiply challenges, and to extend the practice of ſingle combat. Courage is ſo eſſential to the character of a ſoldier, that it becomes magnified in his eſtimation, far beyond its real deſert: And he is not only in danger of miſtaking its true nature, and proper object, but of acquiring a contempt for every virtue, which, in his perverted judgment, ſtands in competition with it. Like Achilles, *jura negat ſibi nata; nihil non arrogat armis.* Reaſon and religion ſhould, therefore, exert their united authority, to check the influence of ſuch baneful errors: And law ſhould rigorouſly puniſh, with diſgrace and infamy, the man, who can ſacrifice humanity to pride, and juſtice to the ſpecious counterfeit of gallantry.

I ſhall cloſe this ſection with the following paſſage, from the celebrated Commen-

Commentaries of Sir William Blackſtone.
" Expreſs malice is, when one, with a
" ſedate, deliberate mind, and formed
" deſign, doth kill another; which formed
" deſign is evidenced by external cir-
" cumſtances diſcovering that inward
" intention; as, lying in wait, antecedent
" menaces, former grudges, and con-
" certed ſchemes to do him ſome bodily
" harm. This takes in the caſe of deli-
" berate duelling, where both parties
" meet, avowedly, with an intent to
" murder; thinking it their duty as
" gentlemen, and claiming it as their
" right, to wanton with their own lives,
" and thoſe of their fellow-creatures;
" without any warrant or authority, from
" any power, either human or divine,
" but in direct contradiction to the laws
" both of GOD and man: And there-
" fore, the law has juſtly fixed the crime
" and puniſhment of murder, on them,
" and on their ſeconds alſo." *

* Book IV. Chap. 14.

II. FALSE MAXIMS OF MORALITY.*

THE hiſtory of Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, admirably exemplifies the folly and danger of adopting FALSE MAXIMS of MORALITY. From the variety of inſtances, which offer themſelves, in the memoirs of this romantic nobleman, I ſhall ſelect the following. During his abode at the duke of Montmorency's, about twenty-four miles from Paris, it happened, one evening, that a daughter of the dutcheſs de Ventadour, of about ten or eleven years of age, went to walk in the meadows with his lordſhip, and ſeveral other gentlemen and ladies. The young lady wore a knot of ribband on her head, which a French chevalier ſnatched away, and faſtened to his hat-band. He was deſired to return it, but

* See page 13.

refuſed.

refuſed. The lady then requeſted lord Herbert to recover it for her. A race enſued; and the chevalier, finding himſelf likely to be overtaken, made a ſudden turn, and was about to deliver his prize to the young lady, when lord Herbert ſeized his arm, and cried out, "I give it you." "Pardon me," ſaid the lady, "it is he who gives it me." "Madam," replied lord Herbert, "I "will not contradict you; but if the "chevalier do not acknowledge, that I "conſtrain him to give the ribband, "I will fight with him." And the next day he ſent him a challenge, "being "bound thereunto," ſays he, "by the "oath taken when I was made knight "of the bath."

He relates, alſo, three other ſimilar caſes, to ſhew, *how ſtrictly he held himſelf to his oath of knighthood.* "This oath," ſays the ingenious editor of lord Herbert's life, "is one remnant of a ſuperſtitious

"and

" and romantic age, which an age, call-
" ing itſelf enlightened, ſtill retains.
" The ſolemn ſervice at the inveſtiture
" of the knights, which has not the leaſt
" connection with any thing holy, is
" a piece of the ſame profane pageantry.
" The oath being no longer ſuppoſed
" to bind, it is ſtrange mockery to in-
" voke heaven on ſo trifling an occaſion."
And it would be more ſtrange, if each knight, like the miſguided lord Herbert, ſhould think himſelf obliged to cut a man's throat, whenever a young lady loſes her top-knot!

Theſe religious engagements are ſo often miſapplied, that it cannot be unſeaſonable, to enter into a brief diſcuſſion of their true nature and obligation. A vow may be defined, *a devout promiſe made to* GOD, *reſpecting either the performance, or omiſſion, of ſome voluntary act*; and is often accompanied with an imprecation of Divine vengeance, on the infraction of

of it. The only legitimate uſe of ſuch an engagement is, to increaſe our abhorrence of what is evil, and to confirm our reſolution in the more arduous purſuits of virtue. It cannot, therefore, be applied to the neglect of any antecedent duty, or to the accompliſhment of any impious or immoral purpoſe. Were it otherwiſe, theſe arbitrary ties might be made a plea for violating every law, whether human or divine. Even prudence, in certain caſes, is of ſufficient force to ſuperſede the validity of a vow. Thus, if the ſuperſtitious parent of a numerous and helpleſs family were, in ſome preſſing danger, to invoke the aſſiſtance of Heaven, by the moſt ſolemn avowal of his reſolution, to give all his ſubſtance to the church, or to the poor; ſuch an abſurd intention has not the nature of an engagement, and is void in itſelf. For, we are aſſured, that the execution of it could never prove acceptable to a wiſe and benevolent Deity, with

with whom alone the contract was made. But this reaſoning does not extend to raſh and injurious bargains; or to promiſes of a ſocial nature, which have been confirmed by an oath. For, as the maintenance of faith is of the higheſt importance in the commerce of life, to add impiety to the breach of it, muſt certainly be deemed an aggravation of the offence. And in ſuch inſtances *the good man changeth not, though he ſwear to his own hurt.*

III. FEALTY TO MAGISTRATES.*

THE COMMANDS of the MAGISTRATE, or of the LEGISLATURE, are not binding, when they oppoſe the known and acknowledged obligations of morality. And the younger Cato has been juſtly cenſured, for engaging in the execution,

* See page 14.

of

of what he himſelf deemed a violent and moſt oppreſſive ſentence, againſt Ptolemy, king of Cyprus. This prince was brother to the king of Egypt; and reigned by the ſame right of hereditary ſucceſſion. He was in full peace and amity with Rome; and was accuſed of no practices, nor ſuſpected of any deſigns, againſt the republic. But the infamous Clodius, who was then tribune, propoſed and obtained the law, from motives of private pique and revenge. To give a ſanction to it, Cato was charged with its fulfilment; and undertook the commiſſion, though contrary to all his ideas of juſtice and rectitude. I believe no moraliſt, of the preſent times, will admit the validity of Cicero's apology, for the miſconduct of his friend. "The "commiſſion," ſays he, "was deſigned "not to adorn, but to baniſh Cato; "not offered, but impoſed upon him. "Why then did he obey it? For the "ſame reaſon, that he *ſwore to obey* "other

"other laws, which he knew to be un-
"juſt; that he might not expoſe himſelf
"to the fury of his enemies, or, by a
"fruitleſs pertinacity, deprive the re-
"public of his ſervices." *Orat. pro Sexto.*

The conduct of SCIPIO AFRICANUS, in the deſtruction of the brave Numantines, is equally reprehenſible. For it is confeſſed, by Lucius Florus, that the Romans commenced hoſtilities againſt that people, without even a pretence to render them juſtifiable. And the horrid barbarities, exerciſed in the ſiege of Numantia, excite peculiar indignation, from the unparalleled fortitude and vigour, which the inhabitants diſplayed, in the defence of their liberties. Such bravery, exerted in a cauſe ſo noble, merited the patronage, and ſhould have called forth the clemency, not the reſentment, of Scipio. But the Romans appear to have entertained no conſiſtent ideas, concerning

concerning the privileges of other nations, or the common rights of mankind. They proudly arrogated to themſelves the government of the world; and the maxim, *regere imperio populos*,* was the plea for every conqueſt. This principle pervades the writings of all their poets and hiſtorians: And even the philoſophical TACITUS, in delivering the memoirs of Agricola, expreſſes not the ſlighteſt diſapprobation, of the numerous, and deſtructive expeditions into Britain. Yet he has, inadvertently, put into the mouth of Galgacus, one of the chieftains of our warlike anceſtors, ſuch ſentiments, as may be deemed a ſtigma on his venerable father-in-law, for obedience to imperial mandates, founded on cruelty and injuſtice. *Raptores orbis, poſtquam cuncta vaſtantibus defuere, terra, et mare ſcrutantur: Si locuples hoſtis*

* *Tu,* REGERE IMPERIO POPULOS, *Romane memento,*
(Hæ tibi erunt artes) paciſque imponere morem,
Parcere ſubjectis, et debellare ſuperbos. VIRG.

*eſt, avari; ſi pauper, ambitioſi. Quos non oriens, non occidens ſatiaverit: Soli omnium, opes atque inopiam, pari affectu concupiſcunt. Auferre, trucidare, rapere falſis nominibus, imperium; atque ubi ſolitudinem faciunt, pacem apellant.**

"Theſe plunderers of the world, after "exhauſting the land by their devaſ-"tations, are rifling the ocean: ſtimu-"lated by avarice, if their enemy be "rich; by ambition, if poor: Unſa-"tiated by the eaſt, and by the weſt: "The only people, who behold wealth "and indigence with equal avidity: To "ravage, to ſlaughter, to uſurp, under "falſe titles, they call empire: And when "they make a deſart, they call it peace."†

Modern conqueſts have been founded on claims equally invalid and tyrannical, with thoſe of the Romans. It is a ſatire

* Tacit. Vit. Agric.

† Aikin's Tranſlation of the Life of Agricola.

on

on human reaſon, and ſtill more diſgraceful to the moral feelings of mankind, to review the principles, on which the Spaniards affected to eſtabliſh their rights to the extenſive dominions in the new world. Their generals were inſtructed to notify, with great formality, to the innocent and ignorant natives of the weſtern hemiſphere, that St. Peter had ſubjected the univerſe to the juriſdiction of the Roman Pontiff; and that this lord of the whole creation had made a grant of the iſlands, of the *Terra Firma*, and of the ocean, to the Catholic Kings of Caſtile. To theſe monarchs they were required to ſubject themſelves; and, if they refuſed, the moſt exemplary vengeance was denounced againſt them. They were threatened to be deſpoiled of their wives and children, to have their country ravaged, and to be themſelves ſold for ſlaves.*

* See Herrara, Dec. I. Lib. 7, Cap. 14. alſo Robertſon's Hiſtory of America, note 23.

Inſtances, like theſe, afford the moſt irrefragable evidence, that fealty to magiſtrates muſt always be regarded, as a conditional obligation; and that implicit obedience to their commands may involve us in high degrees of guilt and infamy.

IV. FALSE OPINIONS CONCERNING FRIENDSHIP.*

MANY of the ancients appear to have entertained very enthuſiaſtic notions of FRIENDSHIP; and to have ſuppoſed, that it ſuperſedes, in particular circumſtances, both wiſdom and prudence, and every ſpecies of moral obligation. When Bloſſius, the boſom companion of the elder Gracchus, was ſummoned before the ſenate of Rome, after the tumult which proved fatal to that tribune, he was interrogated, whether

* See page 19.

he

he had always obeyed the commands of Gracchus? "Yes," anſwered Bloſſius, "moſt punctually, for ſo I thought it "my duty to do. And, if it had been "poſſible for him to deſire me to fire "the Capitol, I ſhould not have ſcrupled "to comply, from my full confidence in "his rectitude."* The folly and criminality of ſuch a blind ſacrifice of reaſon and judgment to the will of another, are too obvious to need any comment. Connections, of this ſervile nature, merit not the honourable appellation of friendſhip. And we may juſtly adopt the opinion, which Cicero has delivered, concerning them: *Si omnia facienda ſint, quæ amici velint, non* AMICITIÆ *tales ſed* CONJURATIONES *putandæ ſunt.*†

Not leſs foreign to the true obligations of this amiable and venerable paſſion,

* Plut. Vit. Gracchi. † Cic. de Off.

---------- The friendſhips of the world
Are oft *confederacies* in vice. ADDISON's Cato.

was the exclamation of Themiſtocles: "God forbid, that I ſhould ſit upon a "tribunal, where my friends were not "more favoured than ſtrangers!" The letter of king Ageſilaus, to one of the Spartan judges, which Plutarch has preſerved, is a ſtill more ſtriking proof of the practical influence of the ſame falſe opinion; becauſe this prince was a man of probity and equity, virtues which belonged not to the Athenian ſtateſmen. "If Nicias be innocent," ſays he, "acquit "him, for the ſake of juſtice; but, if he "be guilty, acquit him, for the ſake of "my attachment to him."* The Roman moraliſt, whom I have ſo lately quoted, very forcibly objects to the interference of friendſhip, in the magiſterial functions: Yet, by a ſtrange deluſion, he permits an advocate to give a *plauſible colouring* to the offence, with which his friend is charged; and to place the fact in the

* Plut. in Vit. Ageſilai.

moſt

moſt advantageous, though it ſhould be a *falſe* light.* In his treatiſe *de Amicitia*, he remarks, that, "in caſes, which affect "the life, or good fame of a friend, it "may be allowable to deviate, a little, "from what is *ſtrictly right*, in order to "comply with his deſires; provided, "however, that our own character be "not injured by it." Such looſe and erroneous maxims certainly merit animadverſion. And I ſhall relate the following incident, which occurred ſeveral centuries before the period of Cicero, as an antidote to them. Chilo, the Lacedemonian, one of the ſages of Greece, who is celebrated for the ſentence, KNOW THYSELF, which he cauſed to be written, at Delphos, in letters of gold, is ſaid to have addreſſed himſelf to his friends, when on his death bed, in terms to this effect. "I cannot, through the courſe "of a long life, look back, with uneaſi-

* Cic. de Off. Lib. II. 14.

" neſs, upon any ſingle inſtance of my
" conduct, unleſs, perhaps, on that, which
" I am going to mention, wherein, I
" confeſs, I am ſtill doubtful, whether
" I acted properly or not. I was once
" appointed judge, in conjunction with
" two others, when my particular friend
" was arraigned before us. Were the
" laws to have taken their due courſe,
" he muſt, inevitably, have been con-
" demned to die. After much debate,
" therefore, with myſelf, I adopted this
" expedient. I gave my own vote, ac-
" cording to my conſcience, but, at the
" ſame time, employed all my eloquence
" to prevail with my aſſociates to abſolve
" the criminal. Now I cannot but re-
" flect upon this act, with concern, from
" an apprehenſion, that there was ſome-
" thing of perfidy, in perſuading others
" to go counter to what I myſelf eſteemed
" right." *

* See ſome judicious obſervations on this ſubject, in Fitz-oſborne's Letters.

Tully's

Tully's falſe ideas, concerning the privileges of friendſhip, betrayed him on ſeveral occaſions, into meanneſs, and even immorality of conduct. In one of his letters, he earneſtly ſolicits Atticus, to be guilty of prevarication, in his defence. It ſeems that he had written an invective oration, againſt an eminent ſenator, ſuppoſed to be Curio. The piece was deſigned only for the entertainment of a ſelect party; but had fallen into the hands of his enemies, and been publiſhed by them. He wrote, therefore, to his friend, in the following terms. *Percuſſiſti autem me de oratione prolata; cui vulneri, ut ſcribis, medere, ſi quid potes.* ——— *et, quia ſcripta mihi videtur negligentius, quam cæteræ, puto poſſes probare non eſſe meam.** "You have "ſhocked me with the news that my "oration is made public. Heal the "wound, if you poſſibly can. ———

* Ep. ad Attic. III. 12.

"As

"As it is written more negligently than "my other orations, I think you may "prove it *not to be mine.*" It is remarkable, that Tully ſhould have made a requeſt, of this nature, to Atticus, who is ſaid to have had ſuch an abhorrence of deceit, that he never uttered a falſhood himſelf, nor could pardon it in another. Cicero's letter to Lucceius, requeſting him to write the hiſtory of his life, "and "not to reject the generous partiality "of friendſhip, *but to give more to affec-* "*tion than to truth*," is too well known to be recited here. *

But,

* In the intercourſe of friendſhip, the Romans do not appear to have diſplayed much delicacy of ſentiment. The paſſages, which I have quoted from Cicero, evince the truth of this obſervation. Horace affords a further confirmation of it, in the cloſe of his beautiful addreſs to Groſphus, Ode XVI. Lib. 2. And Pliny, in one of his familiar epiſtles (Ep. XIX. Lib. 1.) diſgraces an act of the moſt exalted generoſity, by the inſult to amity, which accompanies it. "Born," ſays he to Romanus Firmus, "in the ſame town, educated in the "ſame ſchool, and living together, from our early youth, in "habits of ſtrict connection, I feel the ſtrongeſt motives to "promote the advancement of your fortune and dignity. I "ſend

But, extravagantly as many of the ancients have eſtimated friendſhip, a modern writer, of diſtinguiſhed eminence, has rated it ſtill higher; and does not heſitate to aſſert, that all the diſcourſes on the ſubject, which are handed down to us, appear to him flat and low, in compariſon with the ſenſe, which he entertains of it. "This bond," he ſays, "diſſolves every antecedent obligation, "and the ſecret, which I have ſworn "not to reveal to another, I may, with-"out perjury, communicate to him, who

"ſend you, therefore, three hundred thouſand ſeſterces, "(£2421 ſterling) to elevate you from the rank of Decurio, "to that of a Roman Knight." But he then adds, "From "my knowledge of your character, it is unneceſſary to ad-"moniſh you to behave, in your new ſtation, thus conferred by "me, with the modeſty, which becomes my beneficiary. "For that honour ſhould be ſolicitouſly preſerved, in which "the reputation of a benefactor is involved." *Ego ne illud quidem admoneo, quod admonere deberem, niſi te ſcirem ſponte facturum, ut dignitate à me data quam modeſtiſſime, ut a me data, utare. Nam ſolicitius cuſtodiendus eſt honor, in quo etiam beneficium amici tuendum eſt.*

"is

"is not *another*, but *myſelf*."* If the author of the *Internal Evidence of Chriſtianity*† had confined himſelf to ſuch unwarrantable ideas of friendſhip, when he diveſts it of the ſanction of our divine Law-giver, there could be no difficulty in acquieſcing in his deciſion. But an affection, ſo congenial to the principles of our religion, when properly governed, and judiciouſly directed, ſeems to merit, and, I truſt, is not deſtitute of, evangelical ſupport. Benevolence is, indeed, the great law of the Goſpel diſpenſation; but it muſt have its commencement in the more confined and partial charities: And the man, who has felt not the appropriated regard of a ſon, a brother, a huſband, or a friend, cannot have a heart capable of being expanded with philanthropy. Even piety itſelf originates from the filial relation, and we learn to transfer, to the Deity, that gratitude

* See Montaigne's Eſſays, Book I. Chap. 27.

† Soame Jenyns, Eſq.

and

and veneration, with which the tender offices, and wiſdom of our parents firſt inſpired us. It is not the object of Chriſtianity to overturn, but to regulate the œconomy of the human mind: And, if benevolence muſt have its foundation in private affection, the divine law, which directs the former, neceſſarily inculcates the latter.

That our Saviour himſelf experienced the tendereſt ſympathies of friendſhip, may, I think, be juſtly deduced, both from his ſtrong attachment to John, the favourite diſciple, and from the expreſſions of peculiar endearment, with which he performed the miracle of raiſing Lazarus from the dead. On this affecting occaſion, the Evangeliſt relates, that *Jeſus wept:* And ſo ſenſible were the Jews of the anguiſh of his ſoul, that they cried out, *Behold how he loved him!** And,

* John, Chapter xi. ver. 35, 36. See ſome admirable reflections on this ſubject, in the notes to Mr. Melmoth's tranſlation of Lælius.

if

if Chriſt gave ſuch a deciſive proof of perſonal attachment and friendſhip, the hiſtory of the Goſpel no leſs clearly evinces, that his diſciples felt an affection of the ſame tender and peculiar kind, to their Divine Maſter. In the pathetic converſation, which paſſed, previous to the ſufferings and death of Jeſus, when he prophetically, but tenderly charged them with their future defection, Peter, in the warmth of his regard, replied, *though I ſhould die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.* The bitter repentance of this Apoſtle, ſubſequent to the miſconduct, which his great Maſter had predicted, affords a further diſplay of the force of his friendſhip. And Chriſt himſelf, afterwards, honoured him with the kindeſt and moſt explicit acknowledgment of it. *So, when they had dined, Jeſus ſaith to Simon Peter, Simon ſon of Jonas, loveſt thou me, more than theſe? He ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knoweſt that I love thee. He ſaith unto him,*

*him, feed my lambs. He ſaith unto him again, the ſecond time, Simon, ſon of Jonas, loveſt thou me? He ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knoweſt that I love thee. He ſaith unto him, feed my ſheep. He ſaith unto him, the third time, Simon, ſon of Jonas, loveſt thou me? Peter was grieved becauſe he ſaid unto him the third time, loveſt thou me? And he ſaid unto him, Lord, thou knoweſt all things; thou knoweſt that I love thee. Jeſus ſaith unto him, feed my ſheep.**

In the intereſting paſſage, here recited, that lively, reciprocal, and peculiar regard, which conſtitutes friendſhip, is not only recogniſed, but appealed to, and authoriſed, as a generous and animating principle of action. And, if the great Founder of our religion has no where expreſsly ordained it, as a duty, it is probably, becauſe this virtue is of *ſpecial*, and not of *univerſal* obligation;

* John, Chap. xxi. ver. 15, 16, 17.

depending

depending on particular relations, and contingent circumſtances, which human power can ſeldom influence or command. It may be added, too, that the divine law preſuppoſes the exiſtence of ſuch affections, as are purely natural and ſpontaneous; and directs its precepts, not to their production, but ſolely to their government and regulation. Hence, we find not, in the whole compaſs of the ſcriptures, one explicit injunction to parents, to love their children.* Yet, ſurely, this very eſſential moral office is not to be excluded from the catalogue of evangelical graces, notwithſtanding the ſilence of ſacred writ, concerning it. And the ſame plea may be extended to friendſhip, with due allowance for its rarer occurrence, and more partial obligation. The Chriſtian, therefore, in perfect conſiſtency with his

* See Dr. Ogden's ſermon on the duty of parents to children, Vol. II. p. 157.

faith,

faith, may admire and imitate the examples of generous amity, which hiſtory and obſervation exhibit to his view. *Peradventure for a good man*, ſays the Apoſtle, *ſome might even dare to die.* And the ſacrifice of our own eaſe, intereſt, or life itſelf, for the advantage of another, with whom we are connected by ſtrong and peculiar ties, may not only be juſtifiable, but highly honourable and meritorious. Let it be remembered, however, that the privileges of friendſhip are ſubordinate to the rights of ſociety; and that no attachment, merely perſonal, can warrant the violation of juſtice, fidelity, or truth.*

V. DISPU-

* The ideas, which have been entertained of VALOUR, and the LOVE of our COUNTRY, are ſtill more licentious than thoſe above recited, concerning FRIENDSHIP. It ſhould ſeem, that the underſtanding is dazzled by the ſplendour, which uſually accompanies theſe virtues; and that they are eſtimated by the rarity of their occurrence, or by the elevated ſtation of their poſſeſſors, rather than by the ſtandard of intrinſic merit, or public utility. Juſtice and probity are ſlightly regarded,

V. DISPUTATION.*

POLEMIC SKILL is a dangerous qualification; and, if not governed by charity, wiſdom, and integrity, may betray the poſſeſſor, either into intemperate zeal, or abſolute indifference for truth. Every object aſſumes an import-

as the *ordinary* duties of ſocial life, equally incumbent on all ranks of men: And he, who practiſes them, appears to have no claim to more than common approbation. But great exertions of courage or patriotiſm, as they exceed the demands, ſo they proportionably excite the admiration of our fellow-citizens. This admiration kindles in the mind an enthuſiaſm, which often ſuſpends, and ſometimes ſuppreſſes the calmer principles of humanity, equity, and truth. And the hero or patriot is indulged in all the privileges, which he aſſumes; nothing being judged criminal, that promotes the perſonal glory of the one, or the ambitious views of the other. The hiſtory of all ages confirms the truth of theſe obſervations: But they are more particularly applicable to the records of antiquity; which, for the moſt part, celebrate the deeds of warriors and ſtateſmen, with unqualified applauſe, and without the leaſt diſcrimination of right and wrong.

* See page 102.

ance,

ance, in our eſtimation, proportioned, in ſome degree, to the labour and attention which we beſtow upon it. And the ſame enthuſiaſm, that dignifies a butterfly or a medal to the virtuoſo and the antiquary, may convert controverſy into quixotiſm; and preſent, to the deluded imagination of the theological knight-errant, a barber's baſon, as Mambrino's helmet.* The real value of any doctrine can only be determined, by its influence on the conduct of man, with reſpect to himſelf, to his fellow-creatures, or to GOD. And it has been well obſerved, by a writer, of diſtinguiſhed abilities, that ſome kinds of error and ſuperſtition are ſo intimately connected with truth and virtue, as to render the ſeparation of them impracticable, without doing violence to both. It is better, therefore, according to our Saviour's excellent advice,

* See Don Quixote.

to let a few tares grow up with the wheat, (if they be of ſuch a nature, as to ſuffer the wheat to grow along with them,) than to endanger the deſtruction of the wheat, by rooting up the tares.*

Bigotry may be aſſociated with truth, as well as with error: And this temper of mind is always unfavourable to piety and philanthropy, whatever be the principles on which it is founded. Eraſmus aſſerts, that moſt of the reformers, with whom he was acquainted, became worſe men, in conſequence of the revolution, which they accompliſhed. I know not whether this fact will be admitted, on his authority. But certain it is, that the fury of zeal, and the acrimony of diſputation, are neither conſonant to the religion of nature, nor to the meek and peaceable ſpirit of the Goſpel.

* See Prieſtley on the Sacrament, page 64.

But

But polemic ſkill is ſometimes employed in the defence of opinions, which are known or believed to be falſe. And, by this practice, the underſtanding either becomes the dupe of its own impoſitions; or acquires that indifference to truth, which conſtitutes incurable ſcepticiſm, and ſometimes terminates in the moſt fatal depravity. For he, who has learned to be regardleſs of right and wrong, in ſentiment or in principle, can have no ſolicitude about the like diſtinctions, in his diſpoſitions or behaviour. Such moral apathy gives full ſcope to every irregular deſire, and vicious propenſity. And, if it be aſſociated with great intellectual endowments, a character may be formed, at once the glory and the diſgrace of human nature. Salluſt deſcribes Catiline as *ſubdolus*, *varius*, *cujuſlibet rei* SIMULATOR *ac* DISSIMULATOR. And I am inclined to believe, that the remarkable portrait of SERVIN, which the duke of Sully has drawn, owes ſome

of its moſt diſtinguiſhing features to the cauſe, here alluded to. "Let the reader "repreſent, to himſelf, a man of a genius "ſo lively, and an underſtanding ſo ex- "tenſive, as rendered him ſcarcely igno- "rant of any thing that could be known; "of ſo vaſt and ready a comprehenſion, "that he immediately made himſelf "maſter of whatever he attempted; and "of ſo prodigious a memory, that he "never forgot what he had once learned. "He poſſeſſed all parts of philoſophy "and the mathematics, particularly for- "tification and drawing. *Even, in Theo- "logy, he was ſo well ſkilled, that he was "an excellent preacher, whenever he had a "mind to exert that talent, and an able "diſputant, for and againſt the reformed re- "ligion indifferently.* He not only under- "ſtood Greek, Hebrew, and all the "languages, which we call learned, but "alſo all the different jargons, or modern "dialects. He alſo accented and pro- "nounced them ſo naturally, and ſo

"perfectly

" perfectly imitated the geſtures and
" manners, both of the ſeveral nations of
" Europe, and the particular provinces
" of France, that he might have been
" taken for a native of all, or any of
" theſe countries; and this quality he
" applied to counterfeit all ſorts of per-
" ſons, wherein he ſucceeded wonder-
" fully. He was, moreover, the beſt
" comedian and greateſt droll, that, per-
" haps, ever appeared. He had a genius
" for poetry, and had written many
" verſes. He played upon almoſt all
" inſtruments, was a perfect maſter of
" muſic, and ſung moſt agreeably and
" juſtly. *He likewiſe could ſay maſs; for*
" *he was of a diſpoſition to do, as well as*
" *to know, all things.* His body was per-
" fectly well ſuited to his mind; he was
" light, nimble, dextrous, and fit for all
" exerciſes: He could ride well; and in
" dancing, wreſtling, and leaping, he was
" admired. There are not any recre-
" ative games that he did not know;

" and he was ſkilled in almoſt all me-
" chanic arts. But, now for the reverſe
" of the medal: Here it appeared, that
" he was treacherous, cruel, cowardly,
" deceitful; a liar, a cheat, a drunkard,
" and a glutton; a ſharper in play, im-
" merſed in every ſpecies of vice, a
" blaſphemer, an atheiſt. In a word,
" in him might be found all the vices
" contrary to nature, honour, religion,
" and ſociety; the truth of which he
" himſelf evinced with his lateſt breath;
" for he died, in the flower of his age,
" in a common brothel, perfectly cor-
" rupted by his debaucheries, and ex-
" pired, with a glaſs in his hand, curſing
" and denying GOD."*

* See the Tranſlation of Sully's Memoirs, Vol. III. p. 92.

VI. INDIS-

VI. INDISCRIMINATE PLEADINGS OF LAWYERS.*

THE Roman orators undertook the defence of their clients, or dependents, in the courts of judicature, without fee or reward. And, under ſuch circumſtances, it might be ſuppoſed, that their pleadings would be regulated by the pureſt principles of juſtice or rectitude. But the fact was, frequently, far otherwiſe. Hortenſius ſupported the cauſe of the infamous Verres: And even Cicero ſeems to have formed a deſign of undertaking that of Catiline, when he was brought to a trial, on account of his cruel and ſcandalous oppreſſions in Africa. For, in a letter to Atticus, he ſays, "It is my preſent intention to

* See page 108.

"defend

"defend Catiline. We have judges to "our mind; yet ſuch as pleaſe the "accuſer himſelf. I hope, if he be ac- "quitted, it will incline him to ſerve "me in our common petition."

Modern lawyers, in their ordinary practice, are governed by other motives, than thoſe of ambition, or the deſire of influence. Yet the profeſſion, in its original eſtabliſhment, appears to have diſclaimed all mercenary conſiderations. And, even according to the laws, which now ſubſiſt, no counſellor can maintain an action for his fees, or ſo much as demand them, without doing wrong to his reputation.* He is liable, alſo, to a year's impriſonment, and to be condemned to perpetual ſilence, in the courts, if detected in the practice of deceit or colluſion.†

* See Blackſtone's Commentaries, Book III. Chap. 3.

† Statute Weſtm. I. 3 Edw. I. Chap. 28. Blackſtone's Commentaries, Book III. Chap. 3.

How

How far the gentlemen of the bar have conformed themſelves to this ſtatute, I am not competent to determine. But Biſhop Burnet relates, of the father of Sir Matthew Hale, that he had ſuch ſtrictneſs of conſcience, as to lay down his profeſſion, becauſe he diſapproved of the common mode of *giving colour, in pleadings*; which he thought a culpable deviation from truth. It is recorded alſo of Sir Matthew Hale himſelf, that, whenever he was convinced of the injuſtice of any cauſe, he would engage no farther in it, than to explain, to his client, the grounds of that conviction. His biographer ſays, that he abhorred the practice of miſreciting evidences, quoting precedents or books falſely or unfairly, ſo as to deceive ignorant juries, or inattentive judges; and that he adhered to the ſame ſcrupulous ſincerity in his pleadings, which he obſerved in the other tranſactions of his life. For, he uſed to ſay,

" it

" it was as great a diſhonour, as a man
" was capable of, that, for a little money,
" he was to be hired to ſay or do, other-
" wiſe than he thought." *

* See Britiſh Biography, Vol. V. p. 383.

INDEX.

A.

ABRAHAM, inſtance of his courteſy, 63.
AGESILAUS, his falſe ideas of friendſhip, 310.
AGRICOLA, his moderation in ſcience, 197.
Allegiance, when not binding, 14.
Animals, their ſubſerviency to man, favourable to univerſal happineſs, 207.
ANTONINUS, MARCUS, his opinion concerning certain ſtudies, 197. His reflections on the laudable qualities of his acquaintances, 276.
APPENDIX, 291.
ARRIA, ſtory of, 47.
ARTS, FINE, a general taſte for them conſidered, 211. Imitative in their eſſence and origin, 213. When injurious to the mind, 218.
Aſſeverations, raſh and haſty, not binding, 12.
Aſtronomy furniſhes ſublime ſubjects for the poet, 238.
ATHENIANS, inſtance of their deteſtation of perfidy, 56. Subſequent falſe maxims concerning public faith, 57.
AURELIUS, MARCUS, his faith in the efficacy of a certain antidote to poiſons, 176.

B.

BACON, Lord, ſtory of, 66.
BARBAULD, Mrs. her deſcription of the night, 242.
Beauty, phyſical and moral, their relation to each other, 204.
BECCARIA, Marquis de, on the certainty of puniſhment, 21.
BLACKSTONE, on the laws relative to duelling, 297.
BLOSSIUS, fact concerning, 308.
BOYLE, Mr. his piety and modeſty, 114. His whimſical conceits in ſome of his theological writings, 155.
BROWN, Mr. SIMON, curious account of, 127.

C.

CARNEADES, ſtory of, 106.
CATO, the younger, cenſured, 302.
CHESTERFIELD, Lord, on the prudent concealment of truth, 38.
CHIAN-FU, ſtory of, 32.
CHILO, curious fact concerning, 311.
CICERO, his ſolitary reſidence at Aſtura, 190. His looſe maxims concerning friendſhip, 311. Influenced his conduct on ſeveral occaſions, 313. Seems to have intended to ſupport the cauſe of Catiline, 329.
Civility, forms of, conſidered, 59.
Cock, curious account of one, 257.
COLUMBUS, ſtratagem of, 24.
Counſel and *Reproof* diſcuſſed, 69, 70.
Courteſy, 62.
Crocodile, improperly deſcribed by Dr. Young, 226.
CROMWELL, OLIVER, ſtory of, 88. His conduct diſcuſſed, 90, 91, 92.
Curvilinear direction, in the motion of animals, 263.

D.

DIOGENES, ſtory of, 65.
Diſputation, 322.

DORSO, CAIUS FABIUS, ſtory of, 82.
Duelling conſidered, 293.

E.

ELIZABETH, ſtory of, 36.
Equivocation, 44.

F.

Faith, what due to rogues and traitors, 28.
Faithfulneſs defined, 5.
Falſity in jeſt, conſidered, 40.
Falſhood defined, 5.
Fealty to magiſtrates, conſidered, 302.
Fictions partake not of the nature of lies, 61.
Friendſhip, falſe opinions concerning, 308. Conſonant to the goſpel diſpenſation, 316.

G.

GALGACUS, a Britiſh chieftain, his ſpeech, 306.
Gentleneſs characteriſed, 67, 68.
GIL BLAS, ſtory of Archbiſhop of Grenada, 70.
Goſpel, gives no direct encouragement to learning, 195.
Greenland, optical deceptions there, 267.

H.

HABIT AND ASSOCIATION, their influence conſidered, 117.
HALE, Sir MATTHEW, never undertook an unjuſt cauſe, 331.
Harmony of the ſpheres, falſe hypotheſis concerning, 233.
HENRY IV. of France, ſtory of, 15, 16, 17. His prepoſſeſſion in favour of aſtrology, 146.
HERBERT, Sir RICHARD, ſtory of, 29.
HERBERT, Lord, ſtory of, 85, 86, 298.
HERCULES, judgment of, burleſqued, 159.

HILARIO, ſtory of, 41.
Hypocriſy conſidered, 84.
HOGARTH, his ludicrous turn of mind, 152.
HOMER, his deſcription of a moonlight and ſtarry night, 241.
Honour, its influence, 11. True and falſe, conſidered, 291.
HORTENSIUS, ſupported the cauſe of Verres, 329.

I.

Jaundice, does not paint objects yellow on the retina, 228.
Ideot, a curious ſtory of, 122.
JESUITS, their verſatile opinions accounted for, 107.
INCONSISTENCY OF EXPECTATION IN LITERARY PURSUITS, 185.
Informers, why held in contempt, 77.
Inſcription at the Leaſowes in Warwickſhire, 204.
Inſincerity in religion, conſidered, 79.
Jocularity, when innocent, 44.
JOHNSON, Dr. SAMUEL, his literary diſappointments, 188.
Judicial Teſtimony, its importance, 20.

K.

KENNEDIES, ſtory of, 11.
KESWICK, without ſinging birds, 270.

L.

LAUZUN, Count de, ſtory of, 209.
Lawyers, their indiſcriminate pleadings, 329. Cannot ſupport actions for their fees, 330.
LOT, inſtance of his courteſy, 64.
Lunatic, account of, 134.
Lying defined, 5.

M.

MARLBOROUGH, Duke, ſtory of, 55.
Man, conſtituted for two great ends, 192.
MARY, Queen of Scotland, ſtory of, 50.
MIDDLETON, Dr. CONYERS, firſt ſtimulated to ſtudy by a ſarcaſm of Dr. Bentley, 141.
Miſpriſion, of treaſon, 77.
Miſts, aſſume poetical ſhapes, 261. Form an intereſting part of the ſcenery of Oſſian's Poems, 262.
Mooriſh Gentleman, ſtory of, 9.
MONTAIGNE, his extravagant notions of friendſhip, 315.
Moral powers, more circumſcribed in their operation than the intellectual ones, 192.
Morality, falſe maxims of, conſidered, 298.
Muſcular actions, from being ſpontaneous become automatic, 118.
Muſic conſidered, 213.

N.

Negroes, ſtory of, 18.

O.

Opinions, falſe, not to be ſupported for the ſake of arguments, 102.
Originality of character explained, 124.
OSSIAN, his deſcription of the night, 243.
OUSAN-QUEY, 7.
Ox, not remarkable for large eyes, 226.

P.

PÆTUS, CÆCINNA, ſtory of, 47.
Painting conſidered, 213.
PARE, ſtory of, 80.
Parental Love, not expreſsly enjoined in the ſcriptures, 320.

Parody conſidered, 160.

PASCHAL, his aſtoniſhing powers of memory, 130. His diſtempered imagination, 132. Further account of, 187.

Paſſion, ruling, how learning becomes, 196.

Patriotiſm, why ſo highly eſteemed, 321.

PAUL, St. his prudent evaſion at Athens, 37, 38. Diſpute with the apoſtle Peter, 94.

PENN, his liberality of ſentiment, 166.

PETERBOROUGH, Earl, ſtory of, 54.

Phyſician, in what circumſtances he may deceive his patient, 46.

Piety, how much injured by ludicrous aſſociations, 168.

PITCAIRN, Dr. ſtory of, 151.

PLINY, diſgraced an act of generoſity, by the inſult to friendſhip, which accompanied it, 314.

Poetry conſidered, 214. On the alliance of natural hiſtory and philoſophy with it, 223.

POLIER, Mr. de, TRIBUTE to his memory, 273.

Politeneſs conſidered, 65.

POPE, remarks on his parodies, 161. His ſolicitude in the proſecution of his literary works, 187.

Poultry, their habitudes, &c. 256.

Promiſe, when the breach of it a lie, 6, 7. Extorted by fear, void, 31. To be performed according to the plain meaning, 48.

Proper names, how the pronunciation of them affected by palſy, 121.

Provoſt of Aberdeen, ſtory of, 165.

Q.

Queſtions, when treacherous, how to be anſwered, 35.

Quakers, their character conſidered, 166.

R.

RAYNAL, Abbè, ſtory related by him, 18.
Religion, conſidered as a ſpeculative ſcience, and as a practical principle, 111.
Reproof and *counſel*, diſcuſſed, 69, 70.
Reſervations, mental, 50.
ROMANS, ſtory of ten, taken by Hannibal at Cannæ, 49. Arrogated to themſelves the government of the world, 305. Had not much delicacy of ſentiment with reſpect to friendſhip, 314.
Rooks, their polity, &c. 254.
ROUSSEAU, the probable occaſion of his paradoxes and misfortunes, 109.

S.

Science, cultivated with advantage, in the buſy ſcenes of active life, 190.
SCIPIO, AFRICANUS, reprehenſible for the deſtruction of the Numantines, 304.
Secreſy conſidered, 75.
Serjeant, Britiſh, innocent ſtratagem of, 22.
Sheep, a knowledge of their natural hiſtory uſeful to the poet, 258.
SHUCKBURGH, Sir GEORGE, his account of the mole in Switzerland, 249.
Smoak, ſometimes a pleaſing object, 260.
Snow, the cauſe of its fertiliſing quality miſtaken by the poets, 230.
SPANIARDS, inſtance of their public faith and commercial honour, 58. The abſurdity of their pretenſions to the dominion of the new world, 307.
STEELE, Sir RICHARD, account of the publication of his Chriſtian Hero, 180.
Stratagems conſidered, 51, 52, 53.
SULLY, Duke, his remarkable account of Servin, 326.

Superſtition, gameſters and ſailors prone to it, 175.
Swan, Milton's deſcription of it, 253.
SWIFT, the influence of particular aſſociations on his mind, 137. His ludicrous reflections on the illneſs of Arbuthnot, 152. His ſhameful ridicule on Mr. Boyle, 155.
Swords, flaming, 264.

T.

TASTE FOR THE BEAUTIES OF NATURE, 201.
THEMISTOCLES, ſtory of, 56. His falſe idea of friendſhip, 310.
THOMSON, his geographical miſtake in the hymn, annexed to the ſeaſons, 236.
Toleration, objections to the term, 98.
Truth, Socratic diſcourſe concerning, 1. Moral, defined, 5.
TURENNE, Viſcount, ſtory of, 28.

V.

Valour, reaſon of the falſe eſtimates concerning it, 321.
Veracity, when incompatible with higher duties, 15.
ULLOA, Don, account of his ſtation on the top of Cotopaxi, in Peru, 247.
Vows, when not binding, 15. Their true nature and obligation, 300.

W.

WATTS, Dr. account of, 186.
WHANG-TO, 6.
WHISTON, Mr. his credulity, 177.
WINCKELMANN's falſe criticiſm concerning Milton, 253.
Witneſs, falſe, in favour of another, unjuſtifiable, 20.

Y.

YOUNG, Dr. the melancholy caſt of his mind, how acquired, 141.

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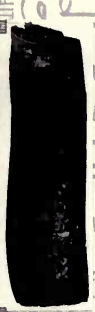

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